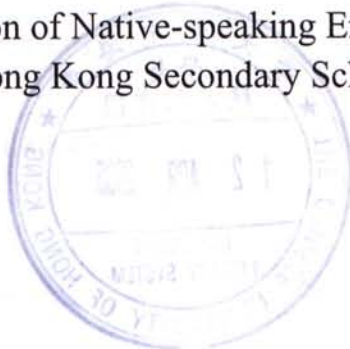


Sociocultural Adaptation of Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) in
Hong Kong Secondary Schools



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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy
In
Applied English Linguistics

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June 2004

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This is a report of a multiple-case study of the sociocultural adaptation of Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) in Hong Kong secondary schools. The study explores the sociocultural challenges they encountered, the strategies they used to overcome these challenges, and the factors that have affected their adaptation.

This study has four primary objectives:

- ④ to describe the sociocultural challenges faced by NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools;
- ④ to identify the ways in which they attempted to overcome these challenges;
- ④ to report on the factors that have affected their degree of adaptation; and
- ④ to suggest ways in which NETs could better adapt socioculturally to Hong Kong's secondary schools.

The study was conducted over an eight-month period from June 2003 to January 2004. The subjects were six NETs in different banded secondary schools. The findings show that NETs encountered the most problems in terms of the school administration. All the subjects had experienced difficulties understanding the protocols and in managing their workloads. Surprisingly, only two chose to voice their concerns and some chose to do the work all by themselves instead of asking for help. The study also found that NETs with a multi-cultural teaching experience might not necessarily best adapt to Hong Kong secondary schools.

The results of this study provide two important implications. Principals and panel heads should be made aware of the differences and the special needs of the NETs, and the Education and manpower Bureau (EMB) should provide better support to the NETs.

Regarding the recommendations for future action research, the views of school principals and panel heads about NETs are worth exploring. The sociocultural adaptation of NETs (PNET)s in primary schools should be another interesting topic to explore as the EMB has already introduced advisory team to provide support to the PNETs.

撮要

是次的研究報告探討多位以英語為母語的外籍老師，在中學裡任教時所面對的文化適應問題。此外，報告還會探討這些外籍老師如何面對和應付社會文化衝擊。

這次研究共有四個主要目的：

1. 描述這些外籍老師在任教的中學裡所面對的社會文化衝擊
2. 指出他們的應付策略
3. 找出影響他們適應的因素
4. 提出一些有效的方法幫助這些外籍老師適應本港中學的社會文化

這次研究於 2003 年 6 月至 2004 年 1 月展開，需時八個月。研究對象包括六名以英語為母語的外籍老師，他們分別在本港不同組別的中學任教。研究發現他們主要面對的問題是校政問題。由於不太了解學校的文化禮節，故工作時亦感到困難。但是，在六名外籍老師中，只有兩位曾向校方提出憂慮，而其餘四人卻選擇獨自解決問題。是次研究同時顯示，即使外籍老師具備多元文化的教學經驗，亦未必能幫助他們適應本港的中學環境。

是次研究指出：

1. 校長及科主任應了解文化差異及外籍老師的需要
2. 教統局應為外籍老師提供更多的支援

最後，筆者建議兩項值得研究的題目：

1. 校長及科主任的看法

2. 小學英語外籍老師如何適應小學中的社會文化（教統局已成立了一個諮詢組織，協助外籍老師）

Acknowledgements

I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor George Braine, who has given me very useful and insightful comments and made my thesis more readable. If not for his guidance, encouragement and support, this thesis would not have existed. I thank him for being very critical and yet very caring, understanding and supportive.

I also owe a deep gratitude to Professor Evelyn Man Yee-Fan, my thesis committee member, who patiently went over the draft of this manuscript and has been most thoughtful and understanding. I wish to thank her for her kindness and for her professionalism in commenting on both the content and the structure of this thesis.

I also owe a deep gratitude to Doctor Arthur McNeill, my other thesis committee member, who has kindly spared time to discuss ideas with me. He has provided very innovative suggestions to make my thesis more attractive and readable. I wish to give special thanks to him for going over the various drafts of this manuscript, especially when he was away from Hong Kong. His kindness, understanding and the extremely useful comments are highly appreciated.

Special thanks to my mentor, Professor Jane Jackson, who introduced the intercultural communication field and Kim's acculturation model to me. She has helped me sharpen my research questions and formulated my interview questions. I thank her for training me as an interviewer.

To the six NETs who participated in my study, I am immensely grateful for their keen interest in my work, for being very generous with their time, for being courageous to fight for permission for class observation to take place and for being very trusting and understanding.

To Dr. David Li and Dr. Angel Lin, I wish to express deep appreciation for their opinions on different types of interviews and the issues related to NETs.

I would like to acknowledge the help of an officer of the Education and

Manpower Bureau (EMB), Mr Simon Tham, who provided statistics and agreed to be interviewed.

My classmates and all my church mates, especially Miss Jackie Lee, Mr Lawrence Chan and Dr. Max Hui-Bon-Hoa, have been an unfailing source of support and encouragement, especially in times of difficulty and frustration. I wish to thank them for their love, their prayers, their insights, and for helping me see things in perspective.

I would like to thank The Chinese University of Hong Kong for giving me a generous amount of studentship to work on my study and research.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for working very hard to give me a good education and taking good care of me whenever I needed them.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter first describes the status of English in Hong Kong and some of the complaints relevant to the falling standard of students' English in Hong Kong. In order to remedy the situation, the Government has adopted two major measures to upgrade the English teaching profession: (1) new requirements for English teachers, and (2) implementation of the NET scheme. Then, the NET scheme will be reviewed.

In the second part of this chapter, purpose of this study, significance of the research and lastly, the organization of the thesis will be reported.

1.1 Background of the Present Study

The background of the present study is divided into three parts: (1) the status of English in Hong Kong, (2) the history of English language teaching regarding the use of native-speaking English teachers, and (3) the NET scheme.

1.1.1 Status of English in Hong Kong

As part of China and a former crown colony of Britain since 1842, Hong Kong has a predominately Chinese population. Almost 95% of the population is ethnic Chinese. Within this racially homogenous society, English is rarely used for intra-ethnic social interaction (Evans, 1996). During the colonial period, the English language was given a rather unusual status in Hong Kong. It did not function as a second language nor was it a foreign language. Because its use has traditionally been restricted to the "high" functions in society, government, business and education – English has been characterized as an "auxiliary" language (Luke & Richards, 1982). Cheung (1984) believes that English had been a "symbol of power more than a means

of communication” (p. 278) in colonial Hong Kong. All the above show that the usage of English has been very limited.

The introduction of native English-speaking teachers can be dated back to the 1842, when the Morrison Education Society School was established. It aimed at providing bilingual education for the Chinese. Not long afterward, missionary organizations began to establish Anglo-Chinese schools in Hong Kong. Since nuns, brothers and fathers are unpaid, the number of native speakers among the teachers was especially high in the Catholic schools. Parents favoring schools where English is used as the medium of instruction is not a recent phenomenon. It can be dated back to the 1850s when the Catholic schools were the most popular.

During the post-war period, the majority of the children in Hong Kong received a primary education in Chinese-medium schools and then switched to Anglo-Chinese schools for their secondary education. The small number of Anglo-Chinese schools was intended for the Chinese elite. It was gradually expanded to cater for the masses. Thus the number of Anglo-Chinese schools increased from 54% in 1955, to 68% in 1965 and from 80% in 1975 to 91% in 1985 and further 94% in 1997. In early 1998, the Education Department announced that only 112 secondary schools would be allowed to use English as the medium of instruction (MOI) while the rest (around 300) would be required to use Chinese as the MOI for all subjects apart from English language. The use of Chinese as the MOI has been blamed for the falling standard of English of Hong Kong students.

1.1.2 Falling Standard of Students' English in Hong Kong

The Standing Committee on Language and Research (SCOLAR) has pointed out in the report that “students have performed consistently” in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCE) Examination in English language (SCOLAR, 2003,

p. 4). The percentage of students attaining Grades A – C, the equivalent of a General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O-level) pass, ranged from 9.4% (about 2055) in 1970 to 8.5 % (close to 6000) in 2002. In general, there was 63% (close to 44000) students who attained Grade E or above in 2002 and 57.7% (about 15000) in 1970. SCOLAR has suggested that perhaps the language demands in the workplace have exceeded the growth in the number of graduates or workers with the required level of language proficiency. As a result, employers have been complaining of the inadequate language proficiency of their employees (Ball, 2003; Wong; 2003; *SCMP* 12/12/90; 2493; 24/5/94; 29/04/03; *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 27/3/91).

Lee and Lam (1994) point out that the general consensus amongst business leaders appears to be that it is not within the remit of business to provide training in general language skills for future employees. In Lin's analysis, she speculates that:

“... what the business interests in Hong Kong want is cheap but good foreign-language speaking labor, ready-made from the school system, and ideally with little need on their part to put in any investment in staff development.” (Lin 1997:430).

Lin believes that the educational policy in Hong Kong is solely dictated by the needs of employers. It is proved to be right by summary of the HKSAR government's position on the language issue by the then Chief Secretary for Administration, Anson Chan, in a speech given to the Australian Chamber of commerce:

“... the concern about deteriorating language skills... is a concern that is shared by the community as a whole. We are determined to tackle this because it seems to us to be extremely important in terms of underpinning Hong Kong's success as an international business society.” (14 January 2000).

Complaints about the low standard of English have been perennial. These complaints can date back to 1880 when the Inspector of Schools, E. J. Eitel, stated that “an overwhelming majority of scholars leave our Government Schools year after year unable to speak English” (cited in Fu, 1979, p. 4).

1.1.3 Solutions Offered

The Government has adopted two major measures to remedy the situation by upgrading the English teaching profession through: (1) the employment of well-qualified and adequately trained teachers, and (2) NET Scheme.

The first measure will first be discussed briefly and then followed by a more detailed discussion of the second measure.

1.1.3.1 New Requirement for English Teachers

One of the measures adopted by the Government is upgrading the English teaching profession. A number of researchers have pointed out that, as recently as the late 1990s, that only about 14% of secondary school teachers of English are both subject and professionally trained (Coniam & Falvey, 1996; 1999; Tsui, 1993; Tsui et al., 1994). Compared with the figure issued by *Teacher Survey*, 60%, there is certainly a discrepancy. The percentage of inadequately trained teacher is still high. In view of that, SCOLAR recommended the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) and school management to look for new language teachers in the 2004/05 school year that have a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree majoring in the relevant language subject; or a first degree majoring in the relevant language subject and a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education (PGDE or PCed) majoring in the same language subject.

The Government has also introduced the language benchmarks to set the

standards of language proficiency expected of English teachers. The language benchmarking aims at ensuring all English teachers possess the minimum proficiency to teach English (i.e. level 3 out of 5 levels), and encouraging them to reach a higher levels of language proficiency. In this way, they can be more knowledgeable in their subject as well as the pedagogical skills. All new teachers in the 2000/01 school year were required to meet the benchmarks. By 2006, all language teachers should have met the benchmarks.

1.1.3.2 The NET Scheme

Another measure offered to upgrade the English language teaching profession as well as the English standards of Hong Kong students is the Native speaking English Teachers (NET) Scheme. In order to enhance the English language environment in local schools, a NET has been provided to each publicly funded secondary school since the 1998/99 school year. An extra NET will be provided if the school has more than forty classes. A similar scheme targeted at publicly funded primary schools was started in the 2002/03 school year. An Advisory Teaching Team (ATT) comprising 20 primary NETs and 20 primary local English language teachers has been formed to provide support and advice to schools with primary NETs. No such a mechanism is found in the secondary NET scheme yet. Both of these NET schemes aim to “enrich the language environment in schools, raise students’ interest and confidence in learning and using English, introduce innovative teaching models and practices, and promote the professional development of teachers” (SCOLAR, 2003, p.46).

At the moment, there are 315 primary NETs and 472 secondary NETs. The NETs at secondary schools are expected to help teaching and assessing as well as assisting in extra-curricular activities. Accordingly, the Education Manpower Bureau

(EMB) has listed the duties of NETs as follows:

- To be responsible for classroom teaching and assessment;
- To provide support for the English Panel Chairperson, including assisting in curriculum development, preparation of teaching materials and school-based staff development;
- To assist in conducting extra-curricular activities related to the English language, e.g. speech, drama, debates, choral speaking and extensive reading;
- To assist in running oral activities for students after school;
- To assist in setting up an English corner in the school where students can come together to practice oral English and read English books under their guidance; and
- To act as an English language resource person for other teachers in the school (EMB, 2003).

1.1.4 History of the NET Scheme

In 1982, the Government invited a group of international educational experts to review Hong Kong's educational system. The Report pointed out the poor English standard of many local Chinese teachers of English. It suggested that the localizing of staff was one of the causes: "the effects of the policy of teaching staff have begun to be visible and the 'localisation of staffing' policy ought to be amended" (Llewellyn, 1982: 3, 1, 9). The Llewellyn committee suggested that students should be exposed to native speakers of English in their early years learning English. In the first report, the Education Commission did not follow Llewellyn's recommendations modestly. Instead of recruiting non-working spouses of British expatriates as Llewellyn has suggested, it recommended the recruitment of expatriate lecturers," they further

recommended that the standard of English teachers and the quality of English teaching in schools should be improved by the recruitment of expatriate lecturers of English for the Colleges of Education and the Institute of Language in Education” (ECR1, 1984:3, 13).

Secondary schools could hire up to three qualified expatriate language teachers. But most schools were reluctant to get involved in finding housing for the expatriates (ECR1, 1984). This problem was perceived as “well worth overcoming”. Accordingly the Report strongly recommended schools to employ locally available native English speakers.

The Government then put forward a new initiative, the Expatriates English Teaching Scheme (EETS) aiming at using native-speakers in English language teaching more extensively. Under this scheme, each Government and aided secondary school could have two or three expatriate teachers of English. It also aimed at encouraging schools to switch from English-medium of instruction to Chinese-medium of instruction. The British Council was appointed to be responsible for recruitment, pre-service training and in-service back-up. This scheme has not been a success at all. When it started in September 1987, there were only 41 schools which agreed to participate in the scheme. By January 1989, 22 out of 72 teachers recruited had quit the scheme. Furthermore, less than half the schools wished to continue with it. No reason was given. But it is crystal clear that problems exist.

After the trial run for the first two years, the Government decided the EETs should continue for two more years, but, with modifications. The Expatriate English Language Teachers Modified Scheme (EELTMS) was introduced. Eleven aided and eight government schools participated in the scheme (Education Department 1991). Improvement was made in several areas, for example, the recruitment was carried out by the schools themselves if they were aided schools. On the other hand, in the case of

Government schools the recruitment was done by the Education Department. The teachers were given more realistic understanding of their role. On top of that, the in-service support for expatriate teachers was organized by the Government's Institute of Language in Education.

The number of expatriate teachers dropped from 33 to 23 in the 1990/91 school year, the second year of the EELTMS. It was still claimed to be getting better. The effectiveness of the scheme was judged mainly by the adaptation and performance of the expatriate teachers. Changes, if any, in motivating students in English learning were not investigated. In the same year, 1990, the Education Commission published its Fourth Report which stated that a permanent scheme had been decided to be in place in September 1991. The response was more favorable. Almost 100 government and aided schools, which is about one third of the total, agreed to have expatriate teachers.

It came as a surprise in late 1995, the Education Commission issued a Draft Report (ECR6 Draft, 1995) which stated: "The Commission notes that the Expatriate English Language Teachers Scheme (the Scheme) has been useful in improving the learning of English in secondary schools" (ECR6 Draft, 1995: ix). The Draft Report recommended that within four years all secondary schools should have two or more native speakers as English language teachers. They ought to be hired on local, but not overseas terms. Obviously, the demand was greater than the supply. According to the report, priority would be given to schools which had switched to be Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI) or which had previously participated in the EETS.

After the handover in 1997, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR, Tung Chee-hwa, announced the implementation of an enhanced Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) scheme from September 1998. Over 700 native English-speaking teachers were started to be recruited by the Education Department

by the end of 1997.

In September 1998, 280 teachers were recruited from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom (Hong Kong Institute of Education, 1999). On top of the 55 native English-speaking teachers employed under the EELTMS, there were 335 NETs (*SCMP* 30/10/1998).

The recruitment exercise of the 2004/2005 school year has attracted 1,100 applicants. According to the EMB, the total number of NETs and NETs teaching in primary schools (PNETs) in Hong Kong in September was reaching 800. That is a long way from just 30 in 1997. The EMB has also announced the full implementation of the scheme in September 2003.

1.1.5 Background of NETs

According to the EMB, NETs should be native-speakers of English or “possess native-speaker English competence”. But the EMB has never defined what they meant by “native-speaker English competence”. They should also possess a bachelor’s degree majoring in English Language or Linguistics or English Literature or English Studies or a Modern Language; and a Post-graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or equivalent or a Teaching of English as a Foreign Language or a Second Language (TEFL/ TESL) qualification at least at diploma level; and at least one year’s post-graduate experience of teaching English at secondary school level or above. It is preferred to have NETs who have taught English as a second or foreign language before, but it is not necessary. This implies that some NETs might have taught English literature to native speakers only. This teaching experience is still considered relevant.

1.1.6 Comments of the NET Scheme

The deputy secretary of EMB, Chris Wardlaw said in the press release that,

“The vast majority of NETs have professionally rewarding experience.” He further added that, “Three out of four wish to renew their contracts and we have a queue of NETs wanting to come to Hong Kong” (Press Release 9/16/2003) He agreed that the investment in the scheme was huge but the benefits were wider than anticipated. The obvious benefits include improved classroom practice, better professional development and improved language abilities. It has also helped raise the English standards of local teachers. Wardlaw’s view seems to contrast with the views held by local English teachers and some of the NETs. In line with Wardlaw’s standpoint, the principal of Sha Tin Tsung Tsin Secondary School believed that most principals valued NETs. She said, “They help a lot, not only for the students. They improve the English environment and bring in a different culture. They organize activities with a different perspective from the local English teachers,” (Forestier and Gibb, 2003). But, not all principals hold the same views even though Wardlaw has said that “most schools are appreciative of [the NET scheme]” (Chan, 12/6/2003). Some principals complained their NETs are less than professional (Forestier, 6/21/2003).

Some NETs have expected themselves to be able to act a “change agent”. Some were forced to teach according to the textbook and exam. Some PNETs are only asked to help in extra-curricular activities but not in actual classroom teaching. Some NETs have criticized the variation of contracts between school and these contracts were often vague. They believed that some principals have exercised their power of withholding salary increases and gratuities to “bully” NETs. (*SCMP*, 4/21/2001, 7/14/2001, 11/3/2001, 12/8/2001, 1/23/2002, 5/17/2003, 9/13/2003).

Some local English teachers (LETs) and local citizens believe the scheme was too expensive. They have expressed their resentment through the newspapers columns. The NET scheme costs about \$500 million a year and some citizens think it is extravagance since our government is short of money (Tu, 12/13/2003). Some LETs

said that there was “not much difference between local and NET teachers in their teaching ability” (Chan, 12/6/2003). LETs think the benefits brought about by NETs are biased, “NETs may benefit schools by bringing in more new teaching methods, but we have many creative local teachers too. We need to have an objective and systematic mechanism to evaluate NET teachers’ performance to see what to do with the scheme” (Chan, 12/6/2003).

On the other hand, some other NETs have expressed their positive experience through various channels. John Wong, a NET was quoted in the press release that, “Hong Kong teachers are able to provide valuable local knowledge and experience while I’m able to contribute ideas, activities and resources used overseas.” (Press release). Other NETs have said both teaching and support staff have welcomed them with “open arms and excitement”. Some NETs believe the success of their experience as being a NET relies on the school management and how the NET is deployed. “It’s about whether the management can deploy you to give as much to your kids and colleagues as possible, and to make your life professionally enjoyable” (Forestier, 6/21/2003). Some NETs have had good experiences in Hong Kong, “they feel rewarded and respected” (Forestier, 6/12/2003).

In order to maximize the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the NET scheme, understanding the problems arisen during their acculturation process is essential.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study has four major objectives:

- 1** to describe the sociocultural challenges faced by NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools;
- 2** to identify the ways in which they attempted to overcome these challenges;

- 3 to report on the factors that have affected their degree of adaptation; and
- 4 to suggest ways in which NETs could better adapt socioculturally to Hong Kong's secondary schools.

1.3 Significance of the Research

The results have significant implications for the deployment of NETs in the Hong Kong context. The roles of NETs have not been clearly defined. Some have been treated like a local English teacher (LET) while others have been treated like a phonic teacher, who was not involved in teaching the normal English curriculum.

The findings can help the present NETs better adapt to the school culture in Hong Kong. It can also better prepare the future NETs before coming to teach as a NET in Hong Kong. On top of the above, the results of this study can provide insights in improving the NET scheme in terms of the recruitment and the implementation.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

My study, which follows, is organized into five chapters. Chapter Two discusses the literature relating to the studies about NETs and the theoretical framework used in this research – Kim's model (Kim, 2001). Chapter Three presents the methodology and also discusses the rationale of the research approach. Chapter Four summarizes the findings. Chapter Five presents the discussion of the findings and data analysis. Chapter Six is the conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter first clarifies some key terms before considering some of the relevant models on acculturation. It begins with Schumann's acculturation model. Then, it is compared with Kim's acculturation model in terms of a number of aspects. After which, Kim's acculturation model is compared with Cultural Synergy Model. For a more detailed review of Kim's acculturation model, please refer to Chapter Five.

The second part of this chapter focuses more on the studies conducted on NETs. The reviews of the relevant parts of these studies will then be discussed. These studies are arranged chronologically

2.1 Clarification of Selected Key Terms

A central term that requires attention is *school culture*. School culture can be defined as the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths understood by members of the school community (Stolp & Smith, 1994). As NETs are members of the school community, they have to overcome certain challenges to adjust to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools. It would be a useful area to explore so that future NETs can have a better idea of what to expect.

School culture is part of broad definition of culture, which is: "(1) Membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting. (2) The discourse community itself. (3) The system of standards itself." (Kramsch, 1998b). When encountering a new culture, different degrees of acculturation will

take place. Hall refers to acculturation from a communicative perspective. It is defined as the process of becoming communicatively competent in a culture we have not been raised in (Hall, 2002). On the other hand, Kim refers to it as “the process by which individuals acquire some (but not all) aspects of the host culture (Kim, 2001, p.31).

According to Kim (2001), *cross-cultural adaptation* is defined as “a dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments” (Kim, 2001, p.31).

2.2 Acculturation Models

As an attempt to determine what factors are more important in causing second language acquisition to occur, Schumann has suggested the variable *acculturation* (Schumann, 1978). Schumann (1978, 1986) and Gardner (1985) believe that acculturation for the learner is an important aspect for second language acquisition to take place. Schumann (1978) has defined two types of acculturation: (1) Type one acculturation, and (2) Type two acculturation. In type one acculturation, learners are socially integrated in the target group. So, they can develop sufficient contact with the target language speakers. They should be psychologically open to target language at the same time. In another word, if a student is studying in a foreign country, he or she is spending a lot of their time with the people from the host culture. For the type two acculturation, learners should have all the characteristics of type one acculturation. On top of that, Schumann believes that the learner would regard the target language speakers as a reference to adopt the new life style and values. In another word, the student tries to lead a life which is similar to the people from the host culture.

According to Kim, acculturation has been defined as the process by which “individuals acquire some (but not all) aspects of the host culture” (p.31). This view of acculturation is very different from Schumann’s. Schumann’s Acculturation Model treats acculturation as one variable affecting second language acquisition; however, this does not apply to Kim’s model, as hers is not a second language acquisition model. It is a much more broadly based model on acculturation applicable to immigrants and sojourners. In Schumann’s definition of acculturation, the learner has to abandon his own set of values and life style and to adopt that of the host culture. In another word, bicultural is not allowed in Schumann’s Acculturation model. The internalization and the acceptance of the host culture suggested in Schumann’s definition of acculturation is viewed as assimilation by Kim (p.31). Deculturation, the loss of some of their original cultural patterns (Kim, 2001), is unavoidable in acquiring something new. However, it seems that Schumann’s Acculturation model implies both deculturation and assimilation take place almost simultaneously. Instead of losing “some” of their original cultural patterns as suggested by Kim, Schumann seems to expect the learners to push those processes to the extreme. In another word, biculturalism is not permitted in Schumann’s acculturation model.

2.2.1 Movement of Acculturation

A mismatch exist between the expectations of the teachers and learners if they come from different cultures. This can result in misunderstandings or even negative feelings towards the other cultures. However, Schumann (1978, 1986) believes that the movement of acculturation is one-way, which is by the learner towards the target culture. In another word, it is the learner’s task to alter their norms of educational cultures and values in order to fit in the host culture. According to the Cultural Synergy model (Jin & Cortazzi, 1995), the movement should be

bi-directional, especially when there is an “academic cultural gap” (Jin & Cortazzi, 1995) existing between the learners and the teachers. With the Cultural Synergy model, it is believed that even if both learners and the teachers express interest in the other’s culture, without the explicit awareness of their own as well as the other’s culture, successful second language acquisition cannot take place. If the learners and teachers still view each other through the mirror of their own cultural norms, only miscommunication can be resulted.

If only the learners are expected to acculturate, they may have to give up the values, which made them successful. In this way, negative feelings may be developed. At the same time, the teacher, who has not acculturated at all, may not be certain about the learners’ needs. As a result, if both parties acculturate towards each other, the academic distance between them will be shortened significantly. Then, effective second language acquisition can take place. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve successful second language acquisition in a classroom setting with one-way acculturation.

Schumann believes that input will become intake when learners are psychologically open to the target language (Schumann, 1978). It is obvious that anything that is incomprehensible can never be absorbed as intake. According to White (1987), learners’ current grammar acts as a filter on the input. In another word, they reject input, which cannot be interpreted in terms of their current knowledge. One of the strategies they would use is to modify the input so that it can be dealt with. Schumann believes that because of culture shock, the disorientation, stress, anxiety and fear resulted would “divert energy and attention from second-language learning” (Schumann, 1978). In Hong Kong classrooms, students may not necessary experience too much stress, anxiety or fear as a result of the culture shock of their expatriate teachers. However, their level of English or current grammar can act as a filter to the

input provided by the NET. Most of the students in Hong Kong share the same first language but at the same time, only a few of the NETs can understand little Chinese. Therefore, in order to know the current grammar of the students, the NETs have to acculturate.

As suggested in the Cultural Synergy model, both the teachers and the learners have to acculturate in order to know the expectations held by each other. Just like the situation in Hong Kong, the NETs would not know if their methodology is effective or not unless they know what their students are expecting. Otherwise, they can simply blame the students for having very low motivation in learning English. For example, some NETs invite their Form Six students, who are around seventeen to eighteen years old, to sing some simple songs together (Chu, 2001). The NETs see these kinds of activities as innovative and relaxing. They work well in other second language classroom in other contexts. However, the NETs complain that Hong Kong students are not cooperative since only a few of them sing with them in class. From the students' point of view, they think these kinds of activities are useless, especially since there is no obvious link between them and the public examination they have to face. A cultural gap exists in this situation. On the one hand, the NETs try to use a relaxing way to teach English. But, on the other hand, the students are expecting things that are essential for their preparations for examinations or they do not see that singing simple English songs is at an appropriate level for a challenging activity. Because the NETs do not know that the expectation hold from the students, their unwillingness to participate was seen as lack of motivation. If the NETs acculturate themselves and realize the norms and expectations of the new school culture they are in, these kinds of misunderstandings should be avoidable. Of course, at the same time, students should also acculturate themselves in order to stop looking at learning English through their examination-oriented lens.

As the present study aims at exploring the adaptation difficulties faced by NETs as well as the strategies used, Kim's acculturation model is used as the theoretical framework, which will be reviewed in Chapter Five.

2.3 Past Studies

2.3.1 Education Convergence Survey

A questionnaire was conducted in February – March in 1999 by Education Convergence to elicit NETs' views and their opinions of the recruitment procedure, including background information they received, the induction program, general comments about their schools, major difficulties and suggestions for improvements to the NET scheme and intentions to renew contracts (Education Convergence, 1999). It suggested the Education Department should investigate the factors influencing the NETs' decision to leave. In this survey, 31 percent of the NETs said they would leave their schools after the completion of their contract.

2.3.2 Lo's Study

In 1999, Louisa Lo conducted a case study as part of her master of education dissertation. Her study aimed at investigating the experience of two native-speaking English teachers of the NET Scheme in their first year of teaching in Hong Kong. The focus was on the challenges and changes experienced by her subjects in their first year of teaching in Hong Kong. Apart from the two NETs, their respective English panel heads were also interviewed.

Altogether four interviews were conducted. The two NETs were interviewed once only. There was no attempt to triangulate the data. One of the two NETs was Lo's colleague. Due to the above two reasons, it is not convincing for the reader to

believe that in-depth data was collected.

The privacy of one of the NETs participated in Lo's study was at risk since the researcher was teaching at that school. It is doubtful that the NET could describe all her problems freely, especially the ones involving relationship with colleagues.

The two NETs of Lo's study were teaching in Band 1 EMI schools in Mid-levels and Kowloon. As English is relatively more widely spoken in the urban areas and the fact that they were teaching in Band 1 schools, the challenges they encountered may be different from those teaching in weaker schools in the rural area.

2.3.3 Chu's Study

Two years later, Kenneth Chu from the Chinese University of Hong Kong did a multiple-case study of native-speaking English teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools. It aimed to help improving the pedagogical and cultural content of future NET's induction programmes, to provide ideas on collaboration among the NETs, the schools and the students in Hong Kong classrooms and cultural settings. Like the subjects in Lo's study, Chu's subjects were newly arrived NETs.

The data collection took place from November 2000 to March 2001, which is less than half a year. Through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, Chu has collected data from the four NETs and their students. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher in person on the last day of the induction programme on September 30, 2000. The total number of NETs present was not mentioned. However, only eleven of them responded to the questionnaire. The generalizability of the data collected by the questionnaire is questionable because of the low response rate.

Chu suggested that the NETs should have a better understanding of Hong Kong students instead of holding "very high expectations" (Chu 2001, p. 110) of their

students. He has also suggested that it is necessary for NETs to modify their teaching styles to “suit the students’ learning habits and their level of English proficiency” (Chu, 2001, p. 111). In other words, Chu implied that NETs should adopt the teaching style of LETs instead of having two-way communication when the two parties are collaborating to work together. So that, the strengths of each party can be fully utilized and positive professional development can be nurtured.

2.3.4 Shum’s study

Shum did a case study to find out how cultural assumptions and values shape the NETs’ and the students’ perceptions of their schools. With interviews and narrative as the data, she attempted to achieve the above aim. She started off with ten subjects. But, after the first interview, only four were left. No explanation was given about what happened to the other six subjects and why they were no longer included in the study.

The working experience as a NET of her subjects was not clearly mentioned. Some of them joined the NET scheme since 1998 while some have joined since 2000. This created a heterogeneous population of subjects for her study. Rationale for having this heterogeneous population of subjects was not stated. Shum has found out some cultural conflicts from her subjects but she has not distinguished them from culture shock. Strategies used to overcome these conflicts were not investigated.

2.3.5 SPACE Research

A group of students from the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE) conducted a study on the NET scheme for their research report as part of a Diploma in Basic Research Skills. Completed in mid-2002, it attempted to explore factors in the work environment

affecting the job satisfaction of NETs. It also tried to find out what NETs considered was a favourable working environment and what arrangements could be made in schools to achieve job satisfaction through a questionnaire and four in-depth interviews with NETs (SPACE, 2002, p.4).

2.3.6 Green's study

In 2003, Green conducted a case study to examine the relationship between NETs and English language Chinese panel chairs in secondary schools in Hong Kong. As a NET herself, Green has interviewed seven NETs and their panel chairs. All the seven NETs have taught since 1998. Cultural conflicts were found to be one of the major causes for a lot of the NETs to feel frustrated. The five major areas of cultural difference including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and long-term and short-term orientation were examined.

As only one interview was conducted with each subject, they may not have warmed up enough to open up their thoughts freely. Since the researcher is also a NET, she may have a strong researcher effect on the panel chairs, especially during the single interview. These may have affected the quality of the data obtained.

2.3.7 The Study by Storey et al

In June 1998, the Standing Committee of Language and Research (SCOLAR) awarded a grant to a team of academics at the Hong Kong Institute of education to conduct a formal evaluation of the NET scheme.

The evaluation addressed the impact of the NETs upon the local school culture as well as their contribution to students' language improvement. However, it was difficult to draw general conclusions about the latter since many other factors

affect student learning. The main conclusion pointed out by the evaluation team was that the scheme required far greater consideration of the complementary roles of the NETs and LETs:

It is recommended that in future planning of the Native-speaking English teacher (NET) Scheme, the rationales underlying the differential duty allocations of local and NET teachers should be widely discussed in the school community to achieve a consensus acceptable to both parties. The present findings indicate that consensus is most likely to be found in the recognition of the cultural, language arts and extra-curricular roles of NETs. (Storey et al. 2001:44)

It is problematic to place the NETs into the schools without making any changes to the existing system and culture especially since the Government wanted NETs to contribute to staff development. School-based staff development has no tradition in Hong Kong and it was not surprising that confusion arose concerning this aspect of the scheme. As the evaluation study concludes, changes to the school culture should have made as part of the NET exercise:

In secondary schools, the effects of the NET are unlikely to be significant without a culture shift involving an orientation towards more professional collaboration between Panel members, and unless corresponding changes have been engineered to change the exam-oriented, textbook-based learning cultures of most schools in Hong Kong. (Storey et al. 2001:45)

A disappointing conclusion of the study was that many of the NETs who appeared to be well integrated within their schools had adopted the same textbook-based, examination-oriented approach to classroom teaching as their local colleagues. Obviously, such convergence of teaching methods was not desired in the

scheme. In the absence of clearer guidelines about NET contributions, it is understandable why many of the teachers conformed to what they assumed were the schools' expectations of them.

Another interesting recommendation made was the NETs will make a better contribution if they have a better understanding of their students' L1. However, further research is required to find out whether the NETs should learn Putongha or Cantonese in order to facilitate their contribution to the NET scheme and schools.

2.4 Research Gap

As mentioned above, most of the studies have involved NETs who are newly arrived or pioneer NETs, NETs who have been here since the implementation of the current NET scheme. For studies involving newly arrived NETs, data collection usually takes place within half a year since their arrival. None of them has addressed the adaptation problem faced by NETs in the later half of their first year, in their second or third year of teaching. For NETs who have arrived in 1998, they may be very well adapted to Hong Kong society already or they may have forgotten the adaptation problems they encountered.

A lot of the studies involved were to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme and the other issues. None of them has addressed the strategies they have used to overcome the adaptation problems they encountered which would be helpful to future NETs.

Seen in this light, this research attempts to study the challenges faced by after they have spent ten months in Hong Kong. Up to date, there have been no studies being conducted on this topic in Hong Kong to the best of my knowledge.

Four research questions will be addressed:

- 1) What are the challenges or problems faced by NETs in adapting to the school culture (e.g., classroom teaching, school setting, environment, relationship with colleagues, relationship with students)?
- 2) How did NETs overcome these challenges? What strategies did the NETs used?
- 3) What factors (e.g., cultural background and teaching experience) have affected their degree of acculturation?
- 4) What are possible ways to help NETs acculturate?

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reports how this study was conducted. It consists of two major components: i) research design and, ii) data collection. The instruments used in this study will first be described and justified. Then information about the subjects such as the reasons for choosing the particular type of subjects, and the actual procedure of conducting the study will be explained.

One of the objectives of this study is to find out the challenges or problems faced by NETs in adapting to the school culture as well as the strategies used to overcome them. There is a triangulation of data from interviews, classroom observation and post-observation interviews.

Another objective of this study is to find out the factors that have affected the NETs' degree of acculturation. Again, data can be triangulated from questionnaire, interviews, classroom observation and post-observation interviews.

3.2 Multiple-case Study

The methodology adopted in this study is case study research. Multiple-case study, a variant of case study design (Yin, 2003), is chosen because the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). Every case can serve a specific purpose within the overall scope of inquiry (Yin, 2003). In other words, every case represents a different scenario of how NETs were struggling or enjoying themselves in Hong Kong secondary schools.

3.3 The Value of Case Study Approach

Case studies can provide crucial information that is too complex for other types of research such as survey or experimental strategies (Cronbach et al., 1980; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). According to Yin, case study (1) is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, (2) relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1981a, 1981b, 2003).

Apart from that, case studies can (1) “explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions”, (2) “describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred” (3) “illustrate certain topics within an evaluation” and 4) “be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes” (Yin, 2003, P.15).

However, one disadvantage is that case studies may take too long and the result in massive, unreadable documents (Yin, 2003, p.11). It can be avoided by abandoning the traditional lengthy narratives (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg, 1991; Yin, 2003).

3.4 Data Gathering

The data was collected from June 2003 to January 2004 through twenty-four interviews with six participants, a questionnaire, classroom observation, post-observation interviews and an interview with an EMB officer.

The interview guide used by Jackson (2001) was adopted for the first interviews of the study, with modifications. The original interview guide was designed by Jackson (2001) to find out the personal and academic background information of the students in Special English Stream (SES) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The interview guide with modifications of the sequence of questions and the use of more appropriate wordings was piloted with two fifth-year NETs and one first year

expatriate teacher. They provide their feedback on the design and the language used in the interview guide. Revision was made based on their suggestions. The other three interview guides were piloted with the same expatriate teacher, who provided verbal feedback instantly. The feedback on the sequence of the questions and the language used was taken into account for revision.

The questionnaire was developed by the pilot study. Major differences exist between the culture of the interviewer and that of the respondents, so it was piloted with the same expatriate teacher. Even though there were only thirteen short questions eliciting some factual information such as name, date of birth, teaching experience and education background, pilot testing is required to eliminate cross-cultural variation and culturally-biased questions (Briggs, 1986).

Another advantage of pilot testing the questionnaire is that the responses yield can readily be quantified and analyzed.

3.5 Rationale for the Data Gathering Used in This Research

The reasons for using interview, questionnaire and classroom observation will be stated in this section. The strengths and weaknesses for each of these tools will also be described.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire allows the researcher to collect data in field settings. The data collected from questionnaire is more amenable to quantification than field notes. One of the strengths of it is that the responses are easier to collate and analyze (Nunan, 1992, p.143).

Also, the questionnaire makes it easier for the researcher to gain access to personal information such as age which might be awkward and embarrassing to ask in a face-to-face interview.

The weakness, however, lies in the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires is a highly specialized business. It is much more complex than what it appears to be (Nunan, 1992, p.142).

3.5.2 Interview

In a semi-structured interview, the questions and scripts are fixed, but the interviewer is free to follow up ideas, probe responses and ask for clarification or further elaboration (Arskey & Knight, 1999). This cannot be achieved with other instrument including questionnaires.

With in-depth interviewing, the researcher can get the respondent to disclose “deeper” information such as individual’s self, lived experience, values & decisions, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge, or perspective but not just merely opinions (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p.104).

In-depth interview develops and builds on the relationship between the researcher and the respondents. As sensitive information such as participants’ personal feelings and reflections as well as their perceptions of others was collected. One of the limitations of this kind of interviews was certainly the ethnical issues arisen. This can be remedied by monitoring non-verbal behavior and facial expression closely to decide how much the research should probe into.

Another limitation is that the interviewee has to respond to the questions asked by the interviewer. The interviewees might try to provide the right answers to please the researcher by picking up on any accidental or careless hints. They might also want to present themselves in a favorable light (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p.109).

3.5.3 Classroom Observation

Since what people claim to think, feel or do does not necessarily align well with

their actions (Arskey & Knight, 1999, p.15), it is essential to see what they actually do by observation. As mentioned above, people tend to neaten things up and to put themselves in socially acceptable light in an interview situation, observational methods are preferred to find out what people do.

The strength of this instrument is that it allows the researcher to focus on the specific aspects, for example, the interaction between teacher and students as well as the interaction between the NETs and their colleagues. Also, it provides a convenient means of collecting data that frees the observer from forming an opinion or making an on-the-spot evaluation during lesson (Wajnryb, 1992, p.8).

However, the limitation of this instrument is that sensitivity towards issues like cross-cultural factors, “face” and vulnerability is needed. Allowing the researcher to enter the classroom may be threatening to the students and the teacher (Wajnryb, 1992, p.26).

3.6 Pilot Study

Prior to the actual implementation of the study, a pilot study with two fifth-year NETs, one male and one female was carried out. There were two main purposes of carrying out the pilot study. Firstly, it gave insights into some problems in the design of the study. Secondly, it provided information of the improvement of the questions of the interview guides.

The population of the subjects in the pilot study and the main study are very different. From the pilot study, it was found that the fifth-year NETs were too well-adapted that they seldom encountered adaptation problems. Furthermore, they have been using strategies unconsciously to cope with the problems they encountered. As they have been working in Hong Kong for so many years, it became very difficult to ask them to describe and to state the strategies they have been using. Another

difficulty surfaced was that the subjects have forgotten the problems they have encountered. It was found that the problems they faced mainly concerned with their colleagues and workload. As a result, it was difficult for them to identify the problems they encountered as well as the strategies they used. With that in mind, a different population of subjects was selected for the main study.

Because SARS broke out when the pilot study was being carried out, the data collection of the pilot study was not completed. As schools were closed during the SARS period, it was impossible to do classroom observation at both schools, School 1 and School 2. The researcher has learnt to install measures to protect the study from the return of SARS.

With the pilot study, it was found that one of the subjects has selected her best class for the researcher to observe. Watching a performed class does not help finding out a NET's experience inside the classroom. In order to see the real side of a NET's world, classroom observation that lasted for the whole day was carried out in the main study to prevent such biases from occurring.

3.7 Instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaire

After the pilot study was conducted, a questionnaire was introduced for facilitating the data collection. The questionnaire was pilot tested with an expatriate teacher to avoid cross-cultural variation. Changes were made.

The final version of the questionnaire was sent to the six subjects by post and via email in mid-September, 03.

There were 13 questions in the questionnaire. All of them focused on the subjects' personal data and information about their schools which included name, gender, date of birth, contact information, working experience, education history,

school name and school address.

3.7.2 Interviews

As this is a longitudinal study, twenty-four interviews were conducted with the six subjects individually at different points of time during June 2003 to January 2004. The four rounds of interviews were thematically arranged. Questions concerning previous working experience, pre-conceptions of teaching in Hong Kong and current teaching experiences were asked in the first interviews. In the second interview, areas included teaching or education philosophy, goals and expectations were discussed. The last two interviews mainly focused on their adaptation. Subjects were encouraged to raise any problems they encountered during their adaptation process in every interview. Samples of the interview questions are included in Appendix B and Appendix C. The interviewees were required to sign the consent letters prior to the first interviews to show their approval to take part in the study. A sample of the consent letter to the subject can be found in Appendix M. The sample consent letter to the subjects' respective schools can be found in Appendix N.

Permission from the subjects was obtained to audio record the interviews.

The interview with the EMB officer took place on December 1, 03. The purpose of this interview was to elicit the EMB's views towards the NET scheme. Questions concerning the perceived problems encountered by NETs and the suggested solution were asked in order to triangulate the data. The interview guide is included in Appendix H.

3.7.3 Classroom Observation and Post-observation Interview

From early October to mid-November, 03, classroom observations and post-observations were conducted. Each subject was observed for one to two whole

days from the moment they arrived at schools until the moment they left schools. There were three major reasons for observing them for the whole day. Firstly, learning from the pilot study, the teacher's classroom experiences vary from classes to classes. In order to get fuller picture, the busiest days of my subjects' schedules were selected. Secondly, the events took place outside the classroom may affect the NETs' adaptation. Lastly, doing full day observation can allow the researcher to have a better understanding of the subjects' world.

Three subjects were observed for two days for three reasons. First, one of them, Crystal lost her voice on the first day of the observation. Secondly, another one of them, Becky, taught so many different classes that the researcher had to observe her for two days in order to see the majority of her classes. Finally, the effect of the researcher's presence has affected the classes of the last one of these three, Ellie. As a result, in order to reduce the researcher's effect, she observed the same classes twice.

In the process of observation, the researcher jotted down notes by using the Classroom Observation Form (see Appendix L).

After the last lesson of the day when observation took place, post-observation interviews were held with the subjects. The main purpose of the post-observation interviews was to triangulate the researcher's perspective with the NETs' perspective.

The data collected from the classroom observation and post-observation interviews gave the research a realistic picture of the NETs' life.

3.8 Subjects

Altogether 6 NETS from different banded schools participated in this study. They and their respective schools have been assigned pseudonyms. Four of them were first-year NETs and the other two were second-year NETs in June, 2003, when data collection began. A fuller picture of the adaptation process can be obtained from NETs

who have already taught for at least one term in Hong Kong secondary schools. According to Kim, “large and sudden adaptive changes are most likely to occur during the initial phase of exposure to a new culture” (Kim, 2001). “Such drastic changes themselves [indicate] the severity of adaptive difficulties and disruptions” (Kim, 2001). Therefore, this population of subjects was selected for this study.

Table 3.1 depicts the subjects who participated in this study.

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
Nationality	Australian	Australian	Australian	American	Australian	Canadian
Age	56	25	50	35	38	37
Full-time teaching experience	32 years	1 year	12 years	5 years	8 years	6 years
Oversea Teaching Experience	✓	×	×	✓	×	✓
Current School	School A	School B	School C	School D1 School D2	School E	School F
Medium of Instruction	CMI	EMI	CMI	CMI	CMI	CMI
Band	2	1	1	3(D1) 2 (D2)	3	3

Table 3.1 Subjects Profile

3.9 Data Analysis

Global analysis, which aims at rough editing of the verbal data to prepare them for later analysis, was applied. This “is completed by noting key words in the entire text and by formulating the consequences of working with the material” (Flick, 2002, p.194). It was applied to the transcripts before the next session of the interviews began in order to make the coming interviews more reflective and reflexive at the same time.

Then, thematic coding was applied as a multi-step procedure. Open and then selective coding were used. Selective coding aims at generating thematic domains and categories for the single case or the pilot case study first. These domains include

“challenges encountered in adapting to the school culture and possible strategies”, “challenges encountered within the classroom and possible overcoming strategies”, “factors affecting the degree of acculturation” and “cultural misunderstandings”. Under the domain of “challenges encountered in adapting to the school culture and possible strategies” the data was further sorted according to their themes. Initially, the themes emerged include: 1) problems related to colleagues, 2) problems related to students, 3) problems related to communication and 4) problems related to culture. The researcher was not satisfied with this way of sorting the data as it was not adequate to sort all the data into different categories. Further data-sorting was carried out until the current themes emerged: 1) Students, 2) Administration, 3) School Culture and 4) Communication.

Under the domain of “factors affecting the degree of acculturation”, the data was categorized according to Kim’s Acculturation Model (Kim, 2001): 1) stranger’s background, 2) host environment and 3) communication practices. With “stranger’s background”, the data was further classified into (i) preparedness for change, (ii) expectations, (iii) motivation, (iv) identity flexibility, (v) working experience, (vi) personality, and (vii) demographic aspects. With “host environment”, four subcategories were adopted: similarity, interaction potential, host attitudes, and demand for conformity. After that, the developed categories and thematic domains linked to the single case were cross-checked. The thematic structure which was resulted from this cross-check can increase their comparability (Flick, 2002).

3.10 Chapter Summary

The research design, the instruments involved and the data collection methods of the study are described in this chapter. To start with, multiple-case study is the methodology adopted in this study. Then, the instruments – questionnaire, interview,

classroom observation and post-observation interview are explained in terms of their structure and implementation. After that, the background information and the criteria for selecting the subjects are described. Lastly, how the data was analyzed is discussed.

Findings will be presented in the coming chapters.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

4 Challenges and Strategies

A lot of different challenges were encountered by the six subjects. The more typical ones are classified into the following four categories: i) students ii) school culture iii) administration and iv) communication. The difficulties faced by the subjects of this subject will be first be described followed by the strategies they have adopted.

4.1 Students

Most of the challenges encountered by the six subjects are related to their students. Surprisingly, some of the problems encountered by subjects teaching in Band Three schools are also shared by those who are teaching in Band One schools.

4.1.1 Large Class Size

All the subjects knew about the large class size before they started teaching, but some found it a challenge to teach so many students in one classroom. Becky believes that because of the class size, her students cannot receive sufficient individual attention from her (Becky, interview2; post observation interviews1, 2). Since she has to teach drama and oral English, she found the space-less classrooms very frustrating, "But I have classrooms with chairs and tables. How can I do drama without space?" (Becky interview 1). To overcome this challenge, she has to be insistent. In other word, even though she was advised not to move the furniture, she inssited on moving them in order to have more space Like Becky, Crystal dislikes the large class size in Hong Kong very much: "The class size is ridiculous. To have

forty-something students in a class, in any class, in any subject is ridiculous. But in a language class, it's even worse" (Crystal interview 1). Alfred found it difficult to have discussion with the whole class because "Hong Kong classes are larger" and "there is not a culture of discussion with students" (Alfred interview 1).

4.1.2 Discipline

All the six subjects encountered difficulties in dealing with the students' discipline. Donald had to break up fights in School D1 (Donald interview 1). Most of the classrooms of the lower forms were in terrible condition (Donald interview 1). According to Donald, since the students stayed in the same classrooms all day, they tended to damage the classrooms. It is one of Donald's duties to stop students from damaging the classrooms in class. The situation was even worse in the multimedia laboratory. The door was broken. By "broken", it implies that the door was completely detached from the hinge. The keys of the keyboards were pulled out (Donald interview 1).

I've encountered some of the most hostile students anywhere in the world and I don't know where the hostility comes from. Some of it may be personal, like something I did, but some of it seems to pre-date. I'm not really sure why. I've been sworn at in Chinese, ridiculed, had things thrown at me. (Donald interview 1, 11)

In order to solve this problem, Donald has tried to invite a local teacher to sit with him to talk to the students to "find out why they have such a problem with [him]" (Donald, interview 1). Some of the students seem to have problems at home.

As an attempt to solve the problem, Donald has told the discipline master about the disruptive behaviour of his students. "For a while, we had to have the discipline master with us — the vice principal, the discipline master and me," (Donald interview 1). The behavioral problem at School D1 was so serious that even three "male

teachers could not handle 45 kids” (Donald interview 1). He regards his first year of teaching at School D1 “a failure” (Donald interview 2). Therefore, the last strategy he used was that “[he] changed school” (Donald interview 2).

One of Ellie’s classes was “very very weak” and “there were students with emotional and behavioral problems” (Ellie interview 2) in that class. Ellie has spoken to the school counselor on several occasions. At the same time, she has been keeping a close eye on certain students and doing a lot of observations. She has also been trying a lot of different types of activities to find out the preferred learning style as she believes in “multiple intelligence” (Ellie interview 2).

Although Becky is teaching in a Band One EMI school, students’ behavior has also been a challenge for her. During the observation, it was found that one of the most frequently used strategies to lower the noise level was “mouths close, eyes on me” (observation notes). In other words, her students should close their mouths and look at her, otherwise she would not start talking. With the lower forms, she makes her students sit on their hands. Apart from that, Becky has also made use of a lot of very small quick activities in succession so that her students would not have time to talk. Because Becky did not use microphone in some of her classes, she could walk around the classroom and pat her students on their head to make them respond to the question she asked. Becky has also adopted the strategy commonly used by local teachers – punishment. Depending on the level of the discipline problem, Becky would hand out demerits, names, detentions or pass on the names of the students to the discipline master or the form teacher.

In order to communicate, Crystal believes that it is essential to discipline and control. Therefore, she “[made] a point of learning [her students’] names” (Crystal interview 1). She learnt their first names within the first few days. If they do not have an English name, she would give them one. On the other hand, if they have “a silly

English name” (Crystal interview 1), she would refuse to call them that name, instead, she imposed another name on her students.

With her F.6 class, if she sees any of them falling asleep, they have to stand up and do ten star-jumps: to kneel down and then jump with opened arms.

Freda usually has a lot of fun activities in her class. However, if the class lacks discipline, together with the LET, they would do more discipline first. The LET who does team teaching together with Freda is mainly responsible for the discipline and translating Freda’s instruction into Chinese.

4.1.3 Lack of Motivation

All of the six subjects are confronted with students who are not very motivated or not motivated at all. This has created a set of different problems for the subjects. For example, all the six subjects found that the less motivated students tend to talk with each other in Cantonese during the English lesson. They found it difficult to “keep their [students’] interest” (Crystal interview 2) and to motivate the students, especially the weaker ones (Alfred interviews 2, 3).

Both Donald and Freda found most of their students in School D1 and School F “do not like school at all” (Freda interview 1) and “they just don’t want to be here” (Donald interview 1). Freda is very empathetic towards her students, “the students don’t have any hope for their future” (Freda interview 1). When comparing the education system of Hong Kong with that of Canada, Freda found that one of the major motivation factors is taken away. Students in School F can be promoted even if they have failed several subjects. In Canada, students are required to retake every single course they failed. As a result, it is not important for her students to pass in English because they can be promoted without a pass in English.

Donald has similar observations. He found his students in School D1 to have “no

intention to go to F.3 or F.4” (Donald interview 1). Being promoted is not important to his students at all.

Crystal has experienced even more problems caused by a lack of motivation. Some of her F.7 students “just want to sleep, who don’t do their homework, and who talk and now sleep” (Crystal interview 2) in her lessons. Even though she has made a “star-jump” rule mentioned in the Section 4.1.2, after being promoted to F.7, her students completely ignore the rule.

Furthermore, her students tend to be absent from her English lessons. For example, if they have double English lessons in the morning, they make a doctor’s appointment in the morning. Crystal tried to solve this problem by speaking to other local teachers, but “[no] one seems to care” (Crystal interview 2). Her colleagues’ advice was “take it easy”, “don’t worry, take it easy” (Crystal interview 2).

On the other hand, some of her students are very motivated to learn English, but not in her lessons. They “see [her] class as something extra” (Crystal interview 2) and they do the work of their tutorial schools during Crystal’s lessons. She found it very contradictory, “I can’t believe that tutorial school in their mind is more important than their school. They tend to see school life here as a social thing,” (Crystal interview 2). From her point of view, the only way to solve this problem is to “close down all the tutorial schools” (Crystal interview 2). Since it is impossible, she resorted to tear up the tutorial school materials whenever she spots them in class.

Another difficulty related to this is that a lot of the students are so examination oriented that they are only motivated to do tasks explicitly related to examination. Crystal has been trying to get them understand that “doing exam papers does not necessarily mean they will be able to do that exam papers” (Crystal interview 2). In other words, Crystal believes that the way to succeed in exams is having the necessary language skills rather than making the same mistakes in doing past exam

papers. To solve this conflict of viewpoints, Crystal has decided to adopt past exam papers as part of her teaching materials.

4.1.4 Low Level of English

As mentioned in the previous section, two of the subjects – Becky and Freda were pleasantly surprised by their students' level of English while the other four were shocked and disappointed upon their first contact.

Although Freda was positively surprised, she feels that the language barrier prevents her from having a closer relationship with her students (Freda, interview 3, post-observation interview). To overcome this challenge, she has invited her students to play with her baby at home or to cook together. This strategy has been implemented successfully because a lot of students were waving at Freda and they initiated conversation with her voluntarily (Freda, observation notes).

Alfred and Donald, on the other hand, found it very difficult to communicate with their students because of their low level of English. It has been a challenge for Donald to discipline his classes in English since a lot of the lower form students in School D1 can hardly count up to ten (Donald, causal conversation).

As mentioned before, Crystal is very disappointed with the level of English of her students, especially the senior ones. A lot of them were too frightened to speak to her. The classes have been challenging because the students would not talk and so the classes become boring.

One of the F.1 classes that Crystal has taught in her first year shocked her by their level of English. They did not understand Crystal and they could not understand the F.1 workbook. They were unable to understand the meanings and they were not able to do the exercises. Then she found out that the local teacher usually read out the instructions in Chinese. They students were happy because they could do the work.

Another challenge encountered by Crystal is that the students are prescribed a reader that they are unable to read. In order to remedy the situation, a new reading program was started. Crystal recorded all the stories on CDs. The students have to read the book, then listen to the CD for pronunciation. After they have read the book to their parents, their parents would sign it (Crystal interview 3).

Alfred, Ellie and Freda have used similar strategy in dealing with the difficulty caused by their students' low level of English. Alfred has asked his Chinese colleagues to write down the Chinese translation for him. During classroom observation, all the subjects except Crystal has asked the students to shout out the Chinese translation of the specific vocabulary. Then the subjects would try to repeat the Chinese pronunciation after the students so that those who do not know the meaning of that vocabulary will understand via the translation. Unfortunately, the translations are not always correct (Observation notes).

Another strategy used by Alfred is to ask his colleagues to help him to write the Chinese translation of new vocabulary.

Freda has taken it further by team teaching. The main roles of the LETs who team-teach with Freda are to discipline the classes and to translate her instructions. In one of the weakest classes, the LET actually translated over 90% of Freda's instruction.

Becky had difficulties communicating with her students starting from the second year. Her views towards her students have changed. In her second year, she found the ten lowest achieving students of F.2, who are arranged to be in the same group, to have no self-esteem, "they listen, they are not interested and they [do not] have any English skills" (Becky interview 2). Even in a Band 1 EMI school, they NET has encountered communication difficulties with the students.

Becky and Crystal believed that their students are too frightened to speak English to

them. As a result, they encountered difficulties in eliciting responses especially from the weaker students.

Alfred thinks that “there is not a culture of discussion” (Alfred, interview 1) and even when he tried to talk to his students to involve them in a discussion, it did not work.

All the above four subjects have adopted a similar approach to solve the problem. Instead of asking for volunteer, they nominated students to answer the questions. From Ellie’s point of view, it is necessary to have more patience and pro-long the waiting time. She believed that there is a difficult and complicated progress going on in her students’ head – translating the English instructions into Chinese, then do the thinking in Chinese, and then translate the answer from Chinese to English. When she has spent more time on waiting, there are slightly more response from the students.

4.1.5 Special Needs

Five of the subjects encountered students with special needs.

In one of Alfred’s classes, there is a blind girl. Alfred has found it challenging to prepare a special set of teaching materials for her. As worksheets, pictures, cartoons, graphs and maps are commonly used as the visual-aid, Alfred encountered enormous amount of difficulties in substituting these materials in order to cater for the blind girls’ need. In other words, Alfred has to spend extra time on “preparing a lot of different exercises for her” (Alfred interview 2).

Donald, Ellie and Freda found that some of their students in School D1, School E and School F have different emotional problems of different degrees. Some of them are living in their own little world showing no sign of interest to the external world (Freda interview 2). Some of them have learning disability (Ellie interview 2; Donald interview 2). Donald has found that a high proportion of his students of one particular

low-achieving class have learning disability. They read and write backward (Donald interview 2). On the other hand, Ellie has a student whose emotion fluctuates rapidly. He might lose his temper and being disruptive or bully others or being completely silent and not participating in class in one lesson. Ellie believed that support should be provided so that these students' special needs are catered and they can integrate into the mainstream feeling more successful (Ellie interview 2).

4.2 Administration

All the six subjects have encountered difficulties in adapting to the administration of their schools. The challenges include getting to know and understand the appropriate protocols, procedures, attending unnecessary meetings, evaluation of their teaching and being treated like a local teacher.

4.2.1 Staff Meetings

Surprisingly, the medium of staff meetings in all the subjects' schools is Cantonese. All the subjects have to attend these Chinese meetings. Because none of them could understand Cantonese, they all found it a waste of their time. Alfred would rather spend the time on preparation or marking. Crystal, on the other hand, found that most of the local teachers were talking to each other, some were even talking on their mobile phones or doing their own things during the meetings. Therefore, she brings in a letter pad to write letters during the meeting (Crystal Interview 3).

Donald found School D1 to be "not democratic" (Donald, interview 1) because the principal did all the talking and each meeting lasts for several hours.

Even though the principals of these schools have assigned LETs, usually the panel head, to be responsible for translating the key points or doing simultaneous translation, they subjects think that would be too much work for the LET and so,

usually they ask the LET to tell them the key points or what they have to know after the meeting (Alfred interview 1; Becky interview 1; Crystal interview 1; Donald interview 1, interview 2; Ellie interview 1; Freda interview 1).

In School B, staff meetings take place on a monthly basis. Becky found it a waste of time to have “meeting for no reason” and to have meeting when “the decision is already made” (Becky interview 1).

4.2.2 Protocol and Procedures

Alfred, Becky, Crystal and Ellie encountered different difficulties in terms of adapting to the protocols and procedures.

In Alfred’s first term, he found the administration at School A “quite strict” because teachers “are not allowed to leave the school between 8:30am to 4:30pm without permission” (Alfred interview 1). For all the schools Alfred has taught in oversea, he has never encountered such a rule (Alfred interview 1).

One of the major difficulties encountered by Becky is managing the protocol – “Making sure you ask this person before you ask that person before you do this before you do that” (Becky interview 1). For example, when Becky first arrived, she was told to start an English Corner. She had to read the catalogue and choose the furniture. “Every time [she] spoke to the person in charged, things are changed” (Becky interview 1). Becky “[has] never said anything about it” (Becky interview 1). She wish she had spoken up so that she did not have to redo the same thing for so many times. In other words, Becky has chosen to be quiet as the strategy to overcome this challenge.

In Becky’s second year of teaching, she encountered a similar challenge with the same person, her panel head. She has asked Becky to prepare a plan without giving her any specific instructions or requirement. Becky had to redo the work for three

times and the panel head, still, was not satisfied. Therefore, Becky decided to adopt a different strategy. She submitted one copy to the panel head and one copy to the principal at the same time. Since the principal accepted it, even the panel head asked her to do further revision, Becky did not have to do it (Becky interview 3). Approaching the person higher up on the hierarchy has become Becky's new strategy.

4.2.3 Evaluation of Teaching

Half of the subjects – Crystal, Donald and Ellie found it difficult to accept how their teaching is evaluated.

In School D1 and School D2, “there [were] not set way to evaluate [the teacher's] performance” which has been a challenge for Donald because he has been “not knowing if what [he was] doing [was] successful or not” (Donald interview 2).

On the other hand, in Schools C and E, teachers were evaluated base on the pass rate of the students and the number of “respect the teacher card” received from the parents (Crystal, Ellie causal conversation). “it's problematic. . . the quality of your teaching is measured by the pass bare rate. . . if I have to worry about their pass bare rate, then if I'm doing it because that's the reason that my teaching is judged on, that's the wrong reason” (Crystal interview 2). To evaluate the quality of teaching base on these factors would affect her motivation to teach, according to Crystal, thus, the quality of teaching will be negatively affected.

4.3 School Culture

Related to the school culture, the subjects of the present study encountered challenges in the following aspects: i) extra-curricular activities ii) streaming students iii) teaching schedule iv) coordination between departments v) changing classrooms vi) staffroom atmosphere vii) education philosophy.

4.3.1 Non-teaching Duties

As mentioned in the previous section, most of the subjects are overwhelmed by the amount of work they are assigned. As shown in the Table 4.1 below, each subject are responsible for a number of different duties. Becky and Donald, in particular, are assigned to do tremendous amount of regular extra-curricular activities. Some of Becky's duties are beyond her capabilities. "... the most stressful one, the English Department IT Coordinator, I don't know why I was made that, I don't have any IT skills but I am," said Becky in the second interview. She was assigned the task but she did not ask anyone for help, "No, what can I do? I can't do anything" (Becky interview 2).

These subjects are also responsible for special events like the Open Day, School Anniversary, Speech Day, Sports Day etc. Alfred, for example, had to work on three consecutive Saturdays in his first year to help attracting new students from Primary 6 to School A (Alfred 1).

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
English Corner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
English Society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speech Festival	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supplementary English classes	✓		✓			
English Speaking Days			✓	✓	✓	✓
Inter-School Oral Practice Coordinator		✓				
Spoken English Coordinator		✓				
English Department IT Coordinator		✓				
Staff development	✓			✓		
Exam supervision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Playground supervision	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table 4.1 Non-teaching Duties

As shown in Table 4.1 above, amongst the six subjects only Alfred and Donald have organized staff development activities. According to the EMB, one of the major

duties of NET is “to provide support for the English panel Chairperson, including assisting in curriculum development, preparation of teaching materials and school-based staff development” (NET Scheme Recruitment). This shows that the majority of the subjects of this study were not used effectively.

On the other hand, they might have been misused. Again, in the same piece of advertisement, NET’s duties regarding the extra-curricular activities are outlined, “To assist in conducting extra-curricular activities related to the English language, e.g. speech, drama, debates, choral speaking and extensive reading,”(NET Scheme Recruitment). Clearly, English Department IT coordinator is beyond the scope of job duties prescribed by the EMB. Unfortunately, there is still no mechanism of monitoring how the NETs are used in secondary schools at the moment. Some of the subjects believe that it is necessary to have similar mechanisms for two major reasons.

I think the EMB should be coming out and actually observing what the NETs are actually doing in school. Some NETs are working extremely hard but other NETs are not doing very much. There need to be a more ongoing assessment of the NETs from external forces outside the school I think (Ellie interview 3, p.6).

Another reason is that such a mechanism is needed to provide support. “It’s almost like we are dropped in the middle of an area with a parachute. That’s it. You have to fence for yourself,” said Ellie in the third interview.

4.3.2 Workload

All the subjects of this study found it difficult to manage the amount of markings and preparation required. The number of classes and teaching periods vary amongst the subjects.

Becky has a big increase in her workload during the second year. The number of teaching periods assigned to her increased from 28 to 33 per seven-day cycle. As mentioned before in Chapter 4, she was assigned to teach a wider range of classes in

the second year. Instead of teaching F.1, 2, 6 and 7 like she did in the first year, she was assigned to teach F. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. As a result, the amount of preparation work was a “big increase” (Becky Interview 2).

In Becky’s first year, she had to teach one full class only but in the second year, she had to teach two. As a result, her markings doubled.

As shown in Table 4.2 below, Becky’s schedule is very tight. She has very little time to do markings and preparation. A lot of her free lessons were taken up for meetings or other non-teaching duties. As mentioned above, most of her lunch hours were taken up for extra-curricular activities or meetings. These have contributed to the stressful work environment for Becky.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1 08:40 – 09:20	ORAL 1DE 204/205/206	ENG 3B 102		ORAL 1C 203	ORAL 1D 204/205/MMLC	ENG 5A 5C 401/403	
2 09:20 – 10:00	ORAL 2E		ENG 6A			ENG 5B/5D 5E 402/404/405/406	
3 10:00 – 10:40	2DE 1 2 304/305/306		103/201				
4 11:00 – 11:40	ENG 3B		ENG 6B	ENG 3B 102		ORAL 2C	ENG 3B
5 11:40 – 12:20	102		304/101	ENG 3B 102		2D 1 2 303/304/305/203	102
6 13:40 – 14:20			ORAL 1E 204/205/301	ORAL 1A 201	ENG 3B 102		
7 14:20 – 15:00		ENG 5B/5D/ 5E	ORAL 1B 202			ORAL 2B	
8 15:00 – 15:40		402/404/405/301				2A 2 1 301/302	

Table 4.2 Becky's Schedule

Crystal and Ellie had similar teaching load during their first year. They had to teach three full classes. Since their second year, the teaching load has been reduced. For Crystal, all her classes are shared by LETs except the sixth formers. In other words, she is responsible for some aspects of the curriculum and the LETs would be responsible for the rest. This arrangement has reduced the amount of markings involved.

Similar arrangement has been applied to Ellie, but she is now responsible for teaching two “full classes” and one “half class”. They are all Form 1 students, too. Allowing the NET to teach one particular form can help reducing the amount of preparation.

Freda, on the other hand, was not aware of the fact that she had to do solo-teaching. She has discussed with her panel head about how she felt. She was allowed to design and plan her schedule. She has 29 teaching periods per six-day cycle and all of them involve LETs to do team-teaching. Although she is busier, she is happier because “I feel this is what I want to be more doing,” said Freda (Freda interview 2).

Donald, on the other hand, has encountered different challenges regarding the workload in the two schools that he has taught in. In School D1, he was mainly responsible for teaching phonics. However, there has not been any concrete phonic syllabus or curriculum and worse was that Donald could not find any textbook or ready-made teaching materials. Therefore, Donald had to develop his own teaching material which was tremendous amount of work.

In School D2, Donald’s teaching duties are similar to a regular class teacher. As a result, the amount of markings has increased a lot for him. The need for keeping up with the markings has been very stressful for him.

4.3.3 Stress

Stress is another source of challenges encountered by the subjects. Apart from the non-teaching duties, markings and preparations, stress has been developed through the need to keep up with the teaching schedule. When the subjects were asked to describe the school culture of their Hong Kong schools, “competition” has been regarded as one of the major characteristics of Hong Kong school culture. In Bond’s literature review on Chinese’s motivational characteristics, a number of studies shows that “Achievement” and “Order” got the highest scores (Bond, 1986). Further studies have shown that the overseas Chinese have been unable to change the overall need pattern. Bond pointed out that when a need pattern has such robustness or resistance to change under long-standing foreign cultural pressure, it must be very basic and crucial to the everyday social life of a Chinese person.

Some of the subjects of this study have demonstrated the need to keep up with the LET in terms of the pace of the scheme of work. On top of that, Ellie has been experiencing stress in trying to resist the temptation of drilling her students to do well in tests or exams.

Getting through the curriculum, getting through the number of grammar items we have to cover for the next exam; pushing the children to just acquire a whole lot of grammar rules, and vocabulary items that you can’t always teach in context; not having the... the time to just try different things that are not on the curriculum; yes, the pressure to constantly be keeping up with other... other classes, and preparing these kids for the next exam; not having enough time to encourage just lessons where we just speak... we just talk (Ellie Interview 1).

All the above show that some of the subjects of the study might have acculturated towards the LETs or the Chinese students. They have started to take up the Chinese need pattern which is very different from their own set of values. This readjustment has brought about stress.

4.3.4 Streaming Students

As mentioned above in 4.1.2, discipline has been a challenge for the subjects no matter they are teaching in a Band 1 school or a Band 3 school or how much teaching experience they have. Some of the subjects blamed the streaming of the students for creating so many problems in low-banded schools. Freda, in particular, detested the way students in School F were further categorised according to their abilities.

Surprisingly, Crystal, Ellie and Freda hold similar attitudes towards the weaker students. They believe that these students “do not have hope for the future” (Ellie, interview 2), they are regarded as “failure” (Freda, interview 3). Becky pointed out that well-behaved and hard-working students were rare in the weaker classes. As a result, these students lack “good models to follow (Becky, interview 2).

4.3.5 Changing Classroom

Most of the subjects found it strange to have teachers moving into different classrooms to teach instead of having the students to move like the way they did in Australia.

Amongst School A to School F, only School A and School E are equipped with elevators.

The subjects found it very exhausting to keep moving from one classroom to another. Take Becky's schedule as an example. As shown above in Table 4.2, she has to attend the morning assembly on the third floor and then, teach a double lesson on the fourth floor which is followed by a group of F.2 on the first floor.

The fact that teachers in Hong Kong keep on moving to different classrooms while students stay in the same room most of the day has led to another problem. Crystal found out the walls of the classrooms were for that particular class to

decorate instead of putting up some visual aids to facilitate teaching. Crystal found it a challenge to adapt to this difference (Crystal, interview 1, interview 2).

Ellie has faced similar problem. However, she has resorted to bring in lots of visual aids with her. At the same time, she would bring along lots of magnets to help putting up the signs, photos, posters and other visual aids on the board for the students to see (Ellie, observation notes). Because some of Ellie's classes are full-classes, she has to spend extra time on enlarging the signs so that the students sitting at the back of the classroom would be able to see clearly.

4.3.6 Education Philosophy

As shown in Table 4.2 below, the subjects of this study have different definitions of their education philosophy. Becky, Crystal and Ellie believe that education is a life-long event (Becky interview 2; Crystal interview 2; Ellie interview 2). Alfred, Donald and Freda believe that learning should be fun (Alfred interview 2; Donald interview 2; Freda interview 2). Becky, Crystal, Donald and Ellie think that education should be practical. Crystal pointed out that "education should be teaching students to think problem solving, thinking about things, not just what is the correct answer" (Crystal interview 2).

Donald has pointed out that teaching should be meaning-driven, it should also be related to language acquisition and information processing (Donald interview 2). During the interview, he has made reference to Krashen's theories. Amongst the six subjects, Donald is the only one who has included language acquisition as a feature of his education philosophy. Perhaps, his education background has contributed to this difference. He is the only subject who has graduated with a degree in linguistics.

Upon contact with the school culture in Hong Kong, the male subjects, i.e.

Alfred and Donald did not experience any change in their education philosophy. Even though Donald has contacted two different school cultures, there has been no effect on his education philosophy according to Donald.

Becky and Crystal have shown similar reaction towards the influence of Hong Kong school culture. Both of them become more affirmed of their own education philosophy. Because the education in Hong Kong contrasts sharply with their education philosophy, it makes her become more aware of the differences. "Hong Kong's education system emphasizes how important education philosophy is because you are aware of how bad it is. It makes you want to change it even more," (Crystal interview 2).

During the first few months of Freda's first year of teaching as a NET in Hong Kong, she has lost her education philosophy because "when you are in a unfamiliar situation, you tend to fall back on what's familiar to you, you tend to do the easiest thing" (Freda interview 2). Fortunately, she has been able to regain it.

Ellie's education philosophy has been changed upon contacting the Hong Kong school culture. At the beginning, she went through a professional identity crisis like Freda did. She "had to reinvent herself to teach basically" and she believed that, "I need to, in some ways, mould myself to the system," (Ellie interview 2). Ellie has found herself encouraging her students to memorize things rather than developing the necessary skills. Moreover, during the first six months, Ellie heard voice recurring in her head: "I really kept saying I'm, I'm having to teach like a local teacher." (Ellie Interview 1).

	Education philosophy	Impact upon contact with Hong Kong school culture
Alfred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Students always want to learn ⊙ Teachers' job: make it easy and interesting for students to learn. ⊙ The education system stops students from learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Too rigid ■ Not flexible ⊙ Students do not learn exactly the same way. ⊙ Teachers should be aware and change his or her teaching strategies to cater for all the students not just one. ⊙ Prefer positive reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ No change
Becky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Education is the most important thing to have. ⊙ Life-long learning ⊙ Learning for use not just for theoretical knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ More affirmed ⊙ "I don't think that Hong Kong education equips students for the real world, I think it's just theoretical."
Crystal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Learning is a life-long thing. ⊙ Learning should be related to the rest of your life. ⊙ Learning should be the whole person, not just this section that has to pass exam. ⊙ Learning should be linked to the community directly. ⊙ Learning include experiences for the person, not simply a means to answer an exam sheet. ⊙ Education should be teaching the students to think problem solving, thinking about things, not just what is the correct answer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ "there can't be any change" ⊙ Hong Kong's education system emphasizes how important education philosophy is because you are aware of how bad it is. ⊙ It makes you want to change it even more.
Donald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Should be grounded in how people learn languages ⊙ Should be grounded in how people process information ⊙ Should be meaning driven ⊙ Should be relevant to students' lives ⊙ Should be fun ⊙ Should be relevant to language acquisition research E.g Krashen's theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ No change
Ellie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ To provide students with <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. life skills 2. ability to communicate 3. positive self-esteem 4. positive self-image ⊙ Teacher should be a very good role model ⊙ Should be constantly learning. ⊙ Teaching should be child-centred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Definitely. ⊙ "I had to re-invent myself to teach basically". ⊙ Can't change it very much. ⊙ "I have to walk fine line between doing what I think is educationally sound, which is often quite different to the educational practices in Hong Kong." ⊙ "I need to, in some ways, mould myself to the system." ⊙ So, I find that I am doing...at times, I am asking students to memorise, to memorise content rather than develop skills.
Freda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ Learning should be fun ⊙ School should be a enjoyable place ⊙ Students should be responsible for doing most of the work, not the teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ when I first arrived, also had a very teacher-centred, grammar-oriented, lecture-based lesson. ⊙ So, what's been nice for me is that I've lost my educational theory a little bit, and now I've been able to regain it

Table 4.3 Impact of Education Philosophy upon Contacting the Hong Kong School Culture

4.3.7 Staff Room Atmosphere

Becky, Crystal and Ellie found the staff room atmosphere to be very different from what they experienced in Australia.

Except the staff rooms in School C and School D2 are divided into departments, all the other schools have one big large staff room for all the departments. Becky and Ellie found it quite challenging to adapt to the noise level and they found it “loud” (Becky Interview 1). Ellie found it particularly difficult to adapt to the environment “where 90% of the time Cantonese is spoken, as opposed to being in a staff room at home where English was the language.” (Ellie Interview 1). It made her feel “very lonely” sometimes.

In Australian culture, it is perfectly acceptable to leave work on time as they believe that they go to work so that they can leave on time (Becky Interview 3). Becky usually finishes her work by the end of the school day. When she left at three-thirty, the official finishing time of the school day, she “[was] frown on at times”.

Crystal has encountered similar problem. She found that if she was drinking a cup of coffee instead of working at her desk, she “[would] be stared at” (Crystal Interview 2). It became impossible for her to have breakfast at her desk unless she was eating and working at the same time. She believed that the essence of the Hong Kong staff room atmosphere is: “You’ve got to be seen to be busy.”

4.4 Communication

The subjects have encountered challenges in initiating communication and interpreting messages with the staff.

4.4.1 Initiating Communication

Before teaching started in September, Crystal had to go to School C in August for staff meetings. After the first meeting, most of the staff went back to their staff rooms, so did Crystal. It was lunch-time. A lot of the female teachers were taking out their purses and getting ready to leave the door. As they were leaving through the door, they were all chatting in Cantonese. From Crystal's point of view, they have forgotten about her and she felt isolated and left out. However, she did not want to regret for not joining them to lunch. So, she asked if they were going to lunch and they then invited her to join them. Because she has basically self-invited herself, she was not entirely happy about it. But this ill-feeling was wiped off when another male teacher, who belonged to the same group of teachers "came rushing towards her] to invite [her] to join them" (Crystal 1).

In order to solve the problem of being excluded, Crystal initiated communication and self-invited to be included.

One of the Putongha teachers at School C had not spoken or responded to Crystal during her first few months of arrival. At first, Crystal thought she might have offended her. So, she spent some time evaluating herself. Then, she decided to initiate communication. She managed to break the ice by seeking help with her Putongha conversation book. The Putongha teacher was very happy to teach her (Crystal interview 1). With this incident, Crystal was not aware of the English language proficiency of the Putongha teacher and greeted her in English. That might be a face threatening act. But, the way she approached the Putongha teacher for help from her expertise has definitely saved the teacher's face.

Alfred, Ellie and Freda held a similar perspective towards the initiating communication. They believed that some NETs were too arrogant (Alfred interview 1; Ellie interview 3; Freda interview 3) and that it is wrong for these NETs to expect

their colleagues to approach them and to make friends with them (Alfred interview 1, interview 2; Ellie interview 3; Freda interview 3).

4.4.2 Abruptness

It has taken Becky a few months before she realized the differences between the underlying meaning conveyed by Chinese's "yes" and Australian's "yes".

Becky described herself as "a person who doesn't have a problem of saying 'no'" (Becky interview 1). At one particular occasion, she has asked her colleagues to do something and they have said "yes" to her. But later, she has found out that actually they were not happy about it and they were unwilling to do what they were told. She would prefer them to have said, "I really can't do that for you," (Becky interview 1).

To overcome this challenge, Becky has determined to do all the work by herself instead of seeking help from her colleagues.

On the other hand, Crystal's experience of abruptness has been quite different. Her colleagues and students were using the English expression, "of course" in a tone that is unusual and "offensive" (Crystal interview 3) to her. When the expression was said in a usual way for example, "Yes, of course she can" (Crystal interview 3). She would interpret it as a polite way of saying, "Oh yes, you don't need to ask next time" (Crystal interview 3). However, it was difficult for Crystal to interpret the underlying meaning when it is said in Hong Kong. "The way it was said was so sharply that, in such a way that it was like, 'You're pretty stupid for asking'," (Crystal interview 3). It took her a while to get used to since she found it "offensive" (Crystal interview 3).

4.4.3 Communication Between EMB and Schools

When Alfred first came to Hong Kong, he did not have money to set up a flat. According to Alfred, the EMB head has told them it was possible to get an advance upon arrival (Alfred interview 2). However, when Alfred rang the EMB, they told him that the money has gone to the school and the school would give him the money. Therefore, Alfred went to the principal of School A and she said, "Oh no, we haven't got the money, you have to go back to the EMB" (Alfred interview 2). Alfred was going back and forth between the two: School A and EMB. Such kind of communication is extra difficult for any one who has newly arrived in a foreign country.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the main challenges encountered by the subjects were described. Unfortunately, the subjects did not have strategies for every difficulty they encountered. In the case when more than one strategies was used, they were compared accordingly.

Some of the subjects have appeared more frequently than others in this section. That does not imply they are poorly adapted. On the contrary, it implies their willingness to open up themselves with the researcher. The problems encountered by Donald in School D2 were not very clear. One possible reason might have to do with the fact that his panel head, Miss D2 has requested a copy of this thesis. She has shown interest in this study before the second interview took place. Thus, the openness of Donald has been adversely affected.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter begins by address the first and second research questions of this

study – finding out the challenges faced by NETs and the strategies used to overcome them. The problems and strategies are sorted into four major sections: (i) Students, (ii) Administration, (iii) School Culture, and (iv) Communication. The specific problems are then further categorized into eighteen sub-categories. In the next chapter, findings addressing the third and forth research questions will be presented.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The chapter attempts to discuss the data based on Kim's Adaptation Model as the framework. It is divided into three main sections: (1) Strangers' Background, (2) Host Environment and (3) Communication Practices. Kim's Adaptation Model will be briefly reviewed first. Then, factors affecting the subjects' adaptation will be then be discussed. Stranger's Background is further classified into

One of the objectives of the current study is to find out what factors have affected the subjects' degree of acculturation. With the modified version of Kim's Adaptation Model, data obtained from interviews and classroom observation will be analyzed accordingly.

5.1 Review of Kim's Adaptation Model

Kim has extensive publications on acculturation process (Kim, 1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1979a, 1979b, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 1998a, 1998b; Kim & Paulk, 1994; Kim & Ruben, 1988). The underlying assumption of her work is that humans have the need to adapt and grow upon contact with any new environment. This highlights both the dynamic nature of acculturation and the role of communication in this process.

Kim's model is very broadly based. In other words, it can be applied to the immigrant experience as well as to temporary experiences abroad. This characteristic of the model is particularly useful for this study because some of the subjects might be staying to work as a NET for a long time while some might leave after the end of this contract. As it is so broadly based, some elements are added to

make it more specific to the NETs' experience in the Hong Kong context.

Kim's (1988, 1995, 2001) theory suggests a way to understand the commonalities in both short-term and long-term adaptation and place them in a broader explanatory system. It does so by focusing not on the length of time but on multitudes of other adaptation-facilitating factors of individual predisposition, the new environment, and communication activities linking the person and the environment. The underlying assumption is that even though the adaptation process plays out in time, thus, is correlated with the individual's cumulative change, what really contributes to this change is not the length of time itself but the individual's communicative interface with the new environment (Kim, 2002).

Kim's model views acculturation as a process of stress, adaptation and growth. "Stress, adaptation, and growth . . . highlight the core of strangers' cross-cultural experiences in a new environment. . . [T]hey constitute a three-pronged *stress-adaptation-growth dynamic* of psychic movement in the forward and upward direction of increased chances of success in meeting the demands of the host environment" (Kim, 2001). Stress is a direct consequence of the lack of fitness between the stranger's subjective experiences and the prevailing modes of experience among the natives (Kim, 2001). However, Kim believes that the state of misfit and a heightened awareness in the state of stress are the very forces that "propel individuals to strive to overcome their predicament and partake in active development of a new cultural understanding and habits" (Kim, 2001). Growth is the result of "dynamic stress-adaptation disequilibrium" (Kim, 2001). Changes in a person's way of looking at the world can be additive in the sense that both the quality and quantity of a person's relationships expand. Kim believes that changes are necessary for any acculturation processes and her model assumes there will be challenges to the acculturation process. To find out the challenges faced by

the NETs in adaptation to the Hong Kong school culture is one of the objectives of this study. Kim believes that the challenges arisen during the acculturation process will inevitably result in stress. Such stress creates a need for change. The changes, if present, would be the strategies used by the NETs to overcome their challenges and difficulties, which is another objective of this study.

According to Kim, the change resulted from stress may be a form of growth and expanded relational abilities or it may be one in which people draw tighter into themselves. Kim does not discuss the more negative “cultural hibernation” reaction to the stress of living in a new culture extensively. However, in her discussion of factors that facilitate positive growth or acculturation and those that do not, “cultural hibernation” has been implied. The factors discussed influence the acculturation process either by promoting growth or hibernation. Kim has organized them according to three contextual features of the acculturation process: stranger background, host environment, and communication practices. In the following sections of this chapter, the main factors together with added factors will be described and discussed with reference to the subjects of this study.

5.2 Stranger's background

The word “stranger” here refers to “a wide range of individuals crossing cultures and resettling in alien cultural environments” (Kim, 2001). The term is derived from Simmel's (1950) early conception of the stranger as someone possessing the contradictory qualities of being both “near and far”:

The unit of nearness and remoteness in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is also far, is actually near. . . The stranger. . . is an element of the group itself. His position as a

full-fledged member involves being both outside it and confronting it. (Simmel, 1960, p. 402)

The term is simply defined as “anyone who is new to the culture” by Hall (Hall, 2002). The factors relating to the stranger’s background can affect the acculturation process no matter what cultures are involved in the transition. Kim’s work identifies six factors related to a stranger’s background: familiarity, motivation, self-image, personality, age and education. Because of the unique situation of NETs, one more factor: expectations is added to the model.

As mentioned before in Chapter Two, Chu, Lo and Shum have found that discipline has been a problem faced by NETs, exploring their expectations will help to find out the cause of the discipline problems, which would affect their adaptation experience.

5.2.1 Preparedness for Change

Strangers come to a new environment with differing levels of preparedness or readiness for learning and adapting to life in that environment. “Preparedness contributes to the overall internal capacity to take on the challenges of the host milieu” (Kim, 2001). The range of cultural learning that the strangers have had prior to relocation would affect their preparedness. A particularly important factor is whether the move is “voluntary and carefully planned or involuntary and unplanned” (Kim, 2001). Well-informed individuals tend to have more realistic expectations about the cross-cultural experience (Black & Gregersen, 1990; Searle & Ward, 1990) owing to formal schooling or training as well as media exposure to and experiences in dealing with people in different cultural and subcultural communities through travel and other personal contacts (Kim, 2001). Preparedness appeared as “familiarity” in Hall’s review of Kim’s model. It deals with how much

information a person has gathered about the host culture before going to that culture (Hall, 2002). The more familiar a person is about the new or host culture, the greater the tendency for growth rather than hibernation.

5.2.1.1 Contact with previous NET

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
Contact	×	✓	✓	×(D1) ✓(D2)	✓	×

Table 5.1 Contact with previous NET

As shown in the table above, some of the subjects have contact with the previous NET before they came to Hong Kong. Contacting the previous NET should help them better prepare for the new culture if the previous NETs were honest about their experience. In Becky’s, Crystal’s and Ellie’s cases, their previous NETs were not very positive but very honest. This helped them to be better prepared. However, their contact via email was very limited. Therefore, they are given +2 in Figure 5.1 as shown below.

In Donald’s case, he did not have a chance to contact the previous NET of School D1. So, he is given -2 on this aspect. On the other hand, he has actually met the previous NET of School D2 several times before the summer holiday. Being able to meet and talk to the previous NET has been very helpful. On top of that, the previous NET has given some records and teaching materials to Donald. The previous NET of School D2 was very positive about his job. Therefore, Donald is given +3 on this aspect.

As for Alfred, although he did not have any contact with the previous NET of School A, he has talked to some of his friends who were working as NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools. That helped Alfred to prepare for the Hong Kong school culture in general. His friends have been very honest about the difficulties

they faced, for example, establishing relationship with their local colleagues. Even though the situation may not be specifically related to School A, that has helped Alfred forming a more realistic expectation. So, he is given +1 on this aspect.

Although Freda has requested for the email address of the previous NET of School F, it was not given. Therefore, she did not have any chance to contact any NET before she arrived in Hong Kong. Therefore, she is given -2 on this aspect as shown below in Figure 5.1.

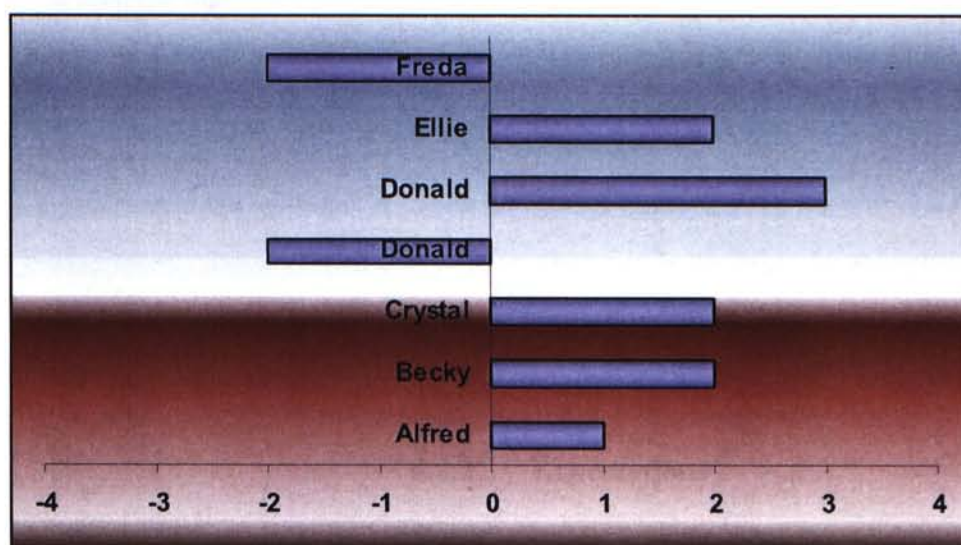


Figure 5.1 Adaptation progress

5.2.1.2 Previous Knowledge about Hong Kong

Amongst the six subjects, Donald is the only one who has traveled to Hong Kong before as a tourist. So, he is given +2 on this aspect as shown in Figure 5.2 below.

Alfred has read some tourists books about Hong Kong. Same as Becky, Donald and Freda, Alfred has also browsed the homepage of EMB. Therefore, Alfred is given +2, while Becky, Freda and Donald are given +1, +1 and +3 respectively.

Because of the short notice, Crystal and Ellie had done basically no

preparation for the new environment at all. According to Kim, the lack of carefully plan of Crystal and Ellie will adversely affect their acculturation. So, they are given -4.

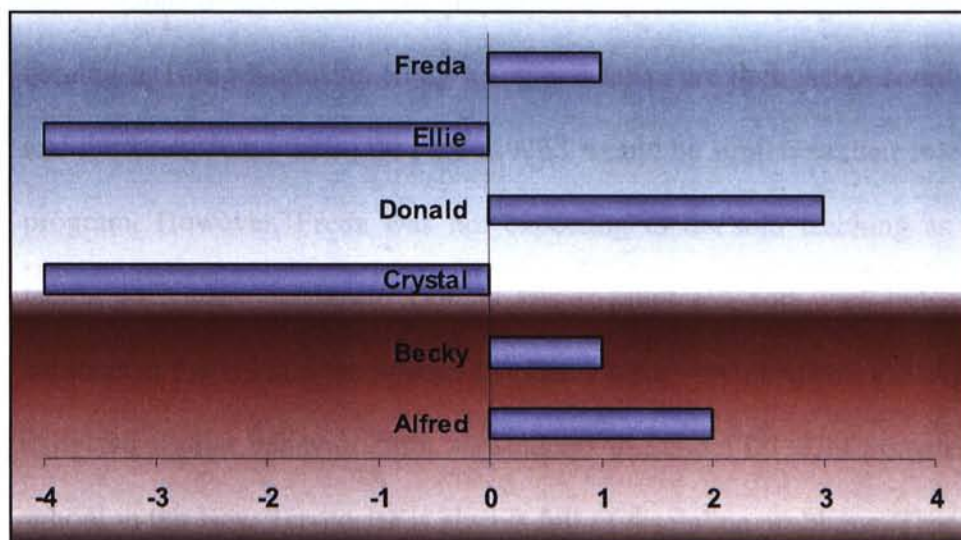


Figure 5.2 Adaptation progress in terms of previous knowledge about Hong Kong

5.2.2 Expectations

Expectation deals with the scenario a person expects to see or to happen about the host culture before actually going to that culture. The more realistic the expectation is, the greater the tendency for growth rather than hibernation.

5.2.2.1 Roles

Alfred and Becky were given a very honest account through their friends of what to expect in Hong Kong secondary schools. Therefore, their expectations match with the reality quite well. In this aspect, both of them are given +2 as shown in Figure 5.3.

Crystal, on the other hand, was expecting to have the freedom to design her lessons, structure her own curriculum and to design the materials. The EMB has created a hallucination to her by inviting her to bring creative lesson plans and

materials to the interviews. As a result, her expectations are very different from what she experienced in reality. That might have promoted hibernation instead of growth for her adaptation, so she is given -3 instead.

Donald and Freda had participated in the JET program in Japan before coming to Hong Kong. As Hong Kong and Japan are both Asian countries, Donald and Freda expected their jobs here as NET would be similar to their roles in the JET program. However, Freda was not expecting to do solo teaching as she always taught as a team in Japan. Donald has encountered very well-behaved Chinese students in the US and his Japanese students were very obedient, too. As a result, he expected similar behavior from his students in School D1. Unfortunately, a band 3 school in the New Territories is always full of discipline problems. That seems to be very far from what he has been expecting. As a result, Freda and Donald are given -1 and -2 respectively.

Ellie knew that Chinese culture is very different from Australian culture. She was expecting the teaching here in Hong Kong would be very different. As a result, she has tried to keep an open mind. From what she knew about the education system in Hong Kong, she was expecting to teach grammar explicitly. However, she was not expecting to teach so many grammatical items within such a short period of time. Again, her current teaching experience seems to fall short from her expectations. Therefore, she is given -1 as shown below in Figure 5.3.

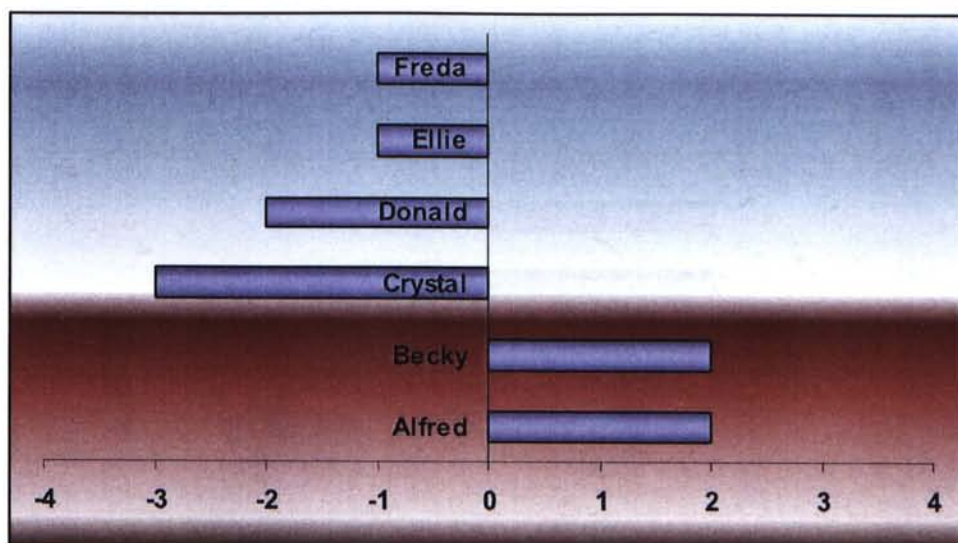


Figure 5.3 Adaptation Progress on "Expectations"

5.2.2.2 Students' level of English

As mentioned before in Chapter 5, four of the subjects: Alfred, Crystal, Donald and Ellie expected their students' English to be a lot better. As a result, their adaptation might have been hindered. They are given -2 on this aspect.

On the other hand, Becky and Freda were pleasantly surprised by the level of English of their students. Since their experience is better than they have expected, this has promoted their adaptation. So, they are given +2 on this aspect.

The more positive one's attitude about the differences between reality and expectations, the more likely that acculturation will occur. Therefore, preparedness for the new culture can also be reflected through the subjects' expectation towards students' level of English.

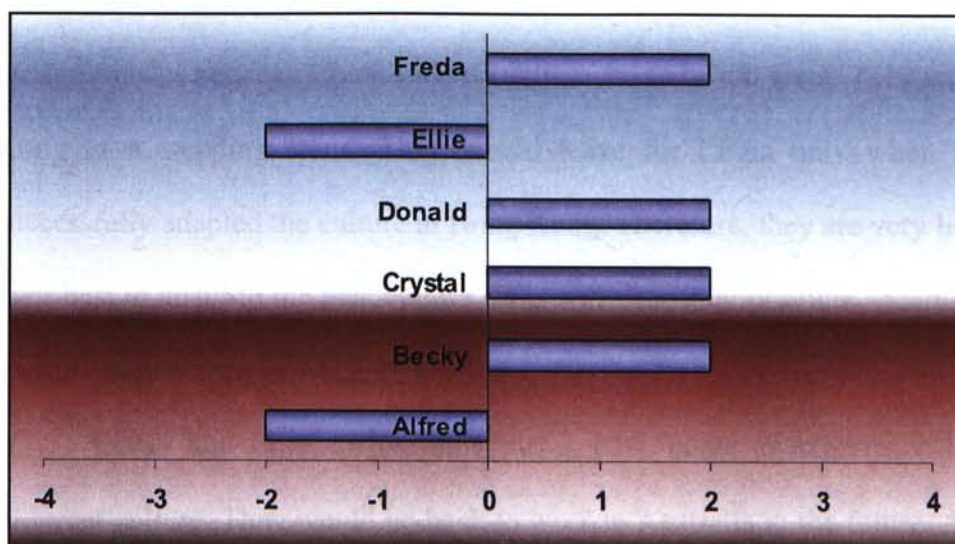


Figure 5.4 The effect of students' level of English on acculturation

5.2.3 Motivation

Motivation deals with the close link between strangers' cognitive development and motivational drives or reflexes toward successful adaptation in the host environment (Kim, 2001).

Adaptation motivation can be defined as "the will or willingness to participate and become functionally fit in the host environment [and it] involves an internal quarrel between the individual's self-command to act and his or her resistance to acting" (Kim, 2001). As a result, what the subjects would like to achieve in the host environment i.e. their respective schools in Hong Kong, would affect their acculturation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the willingness of the strangers to move from culture to another would affect their acculturation as well.

5.2.3.1 Goals

The subjects of this study have very different expectations and goals towards their jobs as a NET. Please refer to the parallel texts of Appendices A to F for details.

Alfred and Crystal wanted to work in the remote area in China. However, the differences between China and Australia seem to be too great. They regard Hong Kong as a stepping stone. They would leave for China only when they have successfully adapted the culture in Hong Kong. Therefore, they are very likely to try their best to adapt to the host culture. This will definitely promote acculturation. As a result, they are given +4 on this aspect.

Becky and Ellie, on the other hand, have come to experience living in a different culture. They would go back to work in Australia in the future. As a result, they can be regarded as sojourners. The extent to which they adapt to the host culture may not be as extensive as that of Alfred's and Crystal's. The main reason is they are adapting with a definite period of time in mind. So, they are given -1 on this aspect as shown in Figure 5.5 below.

Donald and Freda have come to see if they like Hong Kong before deciding how long they would stay. Because they do not have the "long term" commitment, which may have negatively affected their acculturation or their acculturation may have been inhibited. Therefore, they are given -3 on this aspect.

As all the subjects actively desired the opportunity to work as a NET in Hong Kong, this shows that their attitude or motivation with regards to their moving to the new cultural community. This can have a big impact on their acculturation. Alfred has a particular positive motivation. He has heard from his friends that the previous NET at School A was leaving. Instead of responding to the EMB's advertisement, he contacted the principal of School A and to persuade her that he would be a good NET. This shows that Alfred has very high motivation towards the job.

The more actively one desired to adapt to the culture and the more they feel positive towards the host culture, the more likely that acculturation will occur.

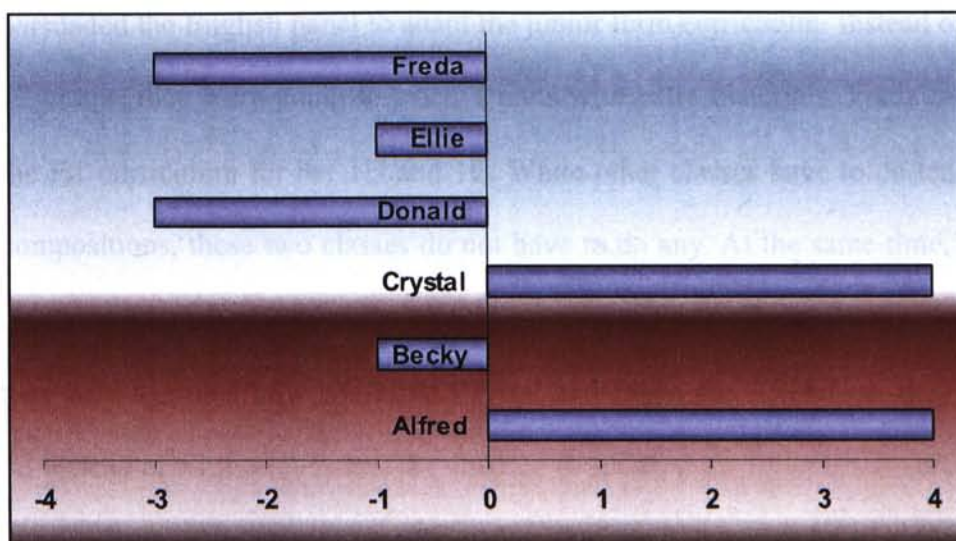


Figure 5.5 Effect of motivation on acculturation

5.2.4 Identity Flexibility

Flexibility in identity refers to the basic psychological –social orientation of individual strangers with respect to themselves, their original cultural group and the host culture in general. A flexible self or a strong self-image is more open to new cultural experiences. Furthermore, a strong self-image is willing to take risks and try new things. On the other hand, a weak self-image often promotes a defensive attitude that is displayed either through withdrawing from difficult situations or acting so self-absorbed that the opportunities for growth are never acknowledged.

Generally speaking, the subjects of this study are fairly confident. All of them are comfortable with themselves and their abilities. They are willing to try new things. So, they are given +1 on this aspect.

Becky and Ellie tended to pick on their weaknesses at times and they tended to worry excessively about how they would do on various tasks. This characteristic may actually hinder their acculturation, so they are given -2 on this aspect instead.

Crystal and Freda are relatively more confident. Both of them have put forward changes in the curriculum at their schools. Crystal has successfully

persuaded the English panel to adapt the junior form curriculum. Instead of teaching 12 units, they were going to teach 9 units with extra materials. Freda has adapted the F.1 curriculum for her 1D and 1E. While other classes have to do ten pieces of compositions, these two classes do not have to do any. At the same time, these two classes do not have to do dictation in the traditional way. These are big changes, and they help to prove how confident Crystal and Freda are. Therefore, they are given +3 instead of +1.

The self image of Donald, on the other hand, may not be as strong. Donald, worried about how his colleagues and students see him. At times, he has struggles with his self-image. So, he is given -1 on this aspect instead.

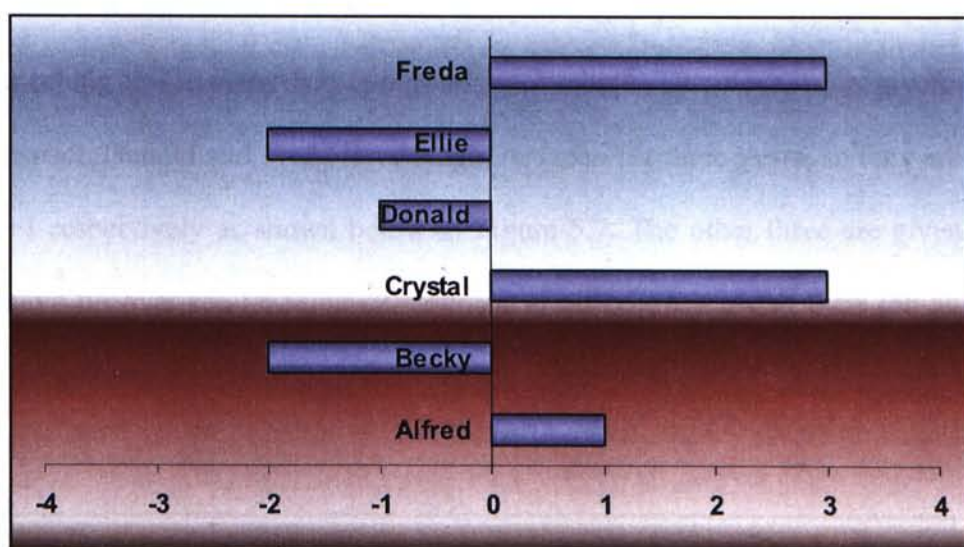


Figure 5.6 Effect of self-image on acculturation

5.2.5 Working Experience

Working experience is not included in Kim's acculturation model, but it is regarded as one of the important factors that have affected the acculturation process of NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools.

5.2.5.1 Intercultural Teaching Experience

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
Over-sea Teaching Experience	3 years in Germany 2 years in Scotland 3 years in Germany	0	0	3 years in Japan 3 months in Saudi Arabia	0	3 years in Japan

Table 5.2 Oversea teaching experience

As shown above in Table 5.2 above, Alfred, Donald and Freda have taught in other countries before while Becky, Crystal and Ellie have only taught in their native country.

Alfred has the most over-sea teaching experience. He has spent six years teaching in Germany and two years in Scotland. Therefore, he is given +4 on this aspect. Donald and Freda have taught in Japan for three years, so they are given +2, +1 respectively as shown below in Figure 5.7. The other three are given 0 as they have no over-sea teaching experiences at all before starting their job as a NET in Hong Kong.

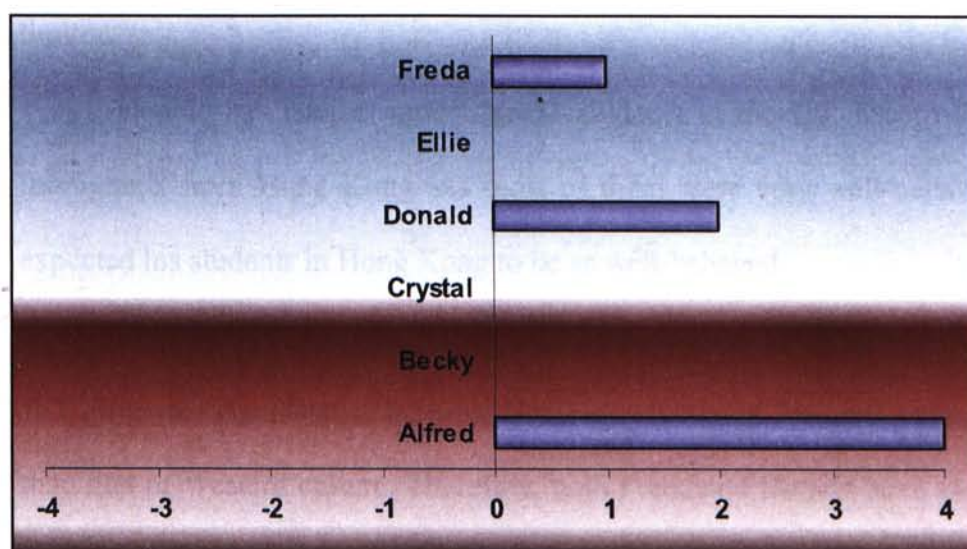


Figure 5.7 Effect of over-sea teaching experience on acculturation

Kim believes that the more intercultural experiences one has, the more likely acculturation will occur. Because the subjects of this study are all teachers, therefore, over-sea teaching experiences would be more important than just intercultural experiences. The NETs have to adapt to the Hong Kong culture in general as well as the specific school culture of their respective schools. Therefore, in the case for NETs, the more over-sea teaching experiences one has, the more quickly they would acculturate.

5.2.5.2 Experience with Asian Students

All the subjects of this study have experience teaching Chinese students and some other Asian students before coming to Hong Kong. These Chinese students include those who were immigrants from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan as well as the ones who were born and raised in non-Chinese speaking countries.

The four Australian subjects: Alfred, Becky, Crystal and Ellie have taught a few Asian students when they were working in Australia. Some of these students were children of Hong Kong businessmen who immigrated to Australia. As a result, they were exposed to Chinese learning patterns even though the exposure was limited.

Donald has taught some Chinese students in the US. Most of them were immigrants from Hong Kong. As most of them were very well-behaved, Donald expected his students in Hong Kong to be as well-behaved.

This assumption was further reinforced by his teaching experience at the JET program. The distance between Chinese culture and Japanese culture is shorter than that of Western culture. Therefore, both Freda and Donald have expected their experience in Hong Kong would be very similar to that of Japan. Like Donald, Freda has taught some students from Hong Kong in Canada.

Having more extensive experience with the Asian students or in Asian countries should have helped the subjects' acculturation.

As Donald has taught Chinese students and has spent three years teaching in Japan, his experience should have facilitated the acculturation the most. As a result, both Donald and Freda are given +3 on this aspect while all the other subjects are given +1 as shown below in Figure 5.8.

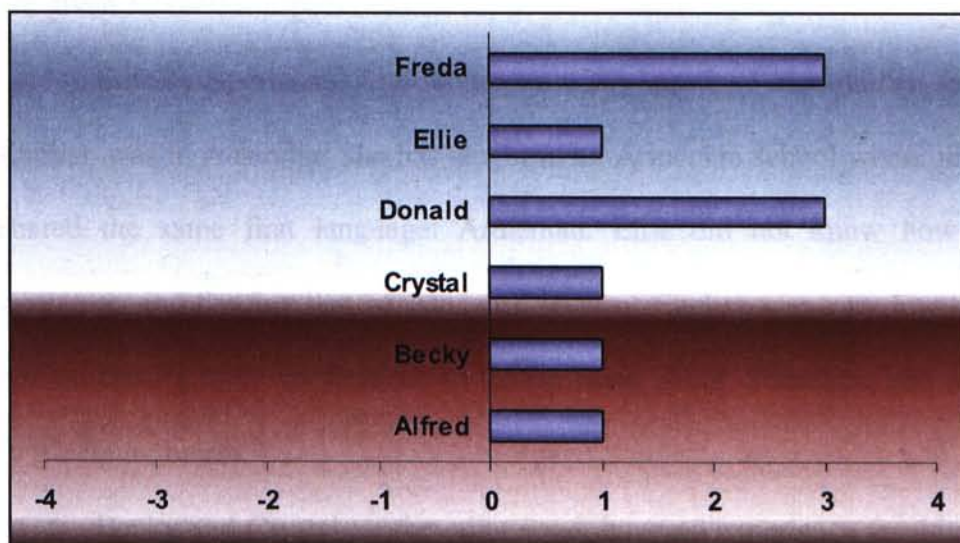


Figure 5.8 Effect of experience with Asian students on acculturation

5.2.5.3 Homogeneous Grouping

Although all the subjects have encountered Chinese students before coming to Hong Kong, not all of them have the experience of teaching EFL to a group of students who were homogeneously grouped. The major challenge of teaching homogeneously grouped students is that the students can communicate freely in their first language, which may or may not be understood by the teacher.

When Alfred was teaching English in Germany, his German students were homogeneously grouped. The situation was different from Hong Kong, especially since Alfred could speak the common language of the students: German. Whereas in Hong Kong, he cannot speak Cantonese, which is the mother tongue of the majority

of the students. As a result, he is given +1 on this aspect as shown in Figure 5.9 below.

Both Donald and Freda have similar experience in Japan. Their students were homogeneously grouped and they share the same mother tongue: Japanese. Both Donald and Freda can speak Japanese but not Cantonese. So, their experience in Japan is similar to Alfred's experience in Germany. However, Donald and Freda are given +2 on this aspect because Japan is an Asian country.

Ellie's experience with homogeneously grouped non-native speakers of English was in Australia. She has taught in an Armenian school where the students shared the same first language: Armenian. Ellie did not know how to speak Armenian and the fact that her students' level of English was very low have made her experience there very similar to that in Hong Kong. Therefore, she is given +2 in the figure below.

Becky and Crystal on the other hand, have no experience teaching students who are homogeneously grouped. With their previous teaching experience, they have always shared the same first language with the students. Therefore, they are given -2 on this aspect.

The experience of teaching in a homogeneously grouped classroom should promote acculturation as Hong Kong classrooms are usually homogeneously grouped.

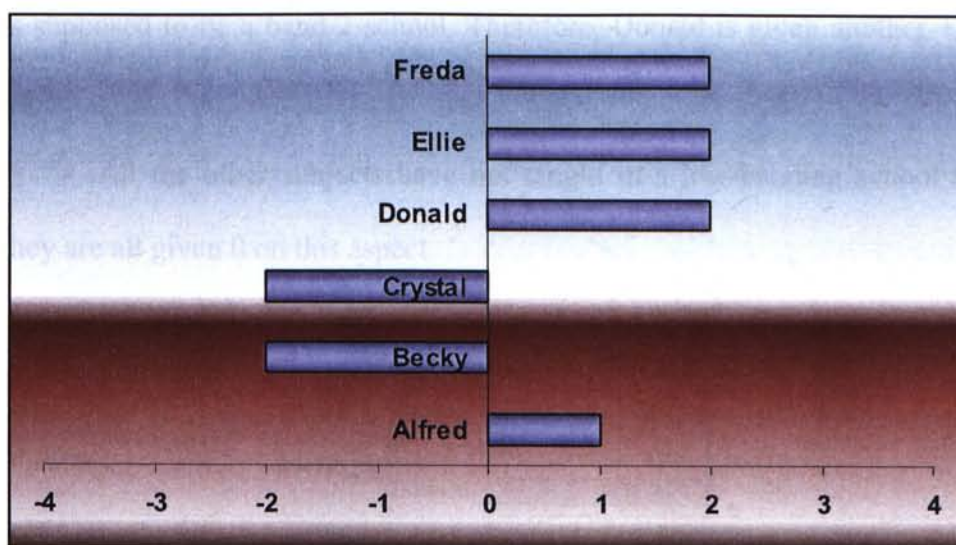


Figure 5.9 Effect of experience of homogeneous grouping on acculturation

5.2.5.4 Experience in low-banded schools

In Hong Kong, students are labeled as Band 1, 2 or 3 after they have graduated from primary school. Students are assigned to different schools according to their banding and their choices. Band 3 students are the weakest comparatively. The schools that admit highest percentage of Band 3 students are commonly known as Band 3 schools. The same applies on Band 1 and Band 2 schools respectively.

The way students are banded is a unique feature of the Hong Kong education system. As mentioned before, the subjects believed that one of the causes of the discipline problems is to group the weak students. As a result, experience in a similar environment would definitely enhance acculturation in low-banded schools.

Since students are schools are not banded in Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Japan and America, none of the subjects have taught in low-banded schools. Donald has taught in a very poor school in the US that should have facilitated his adaptation in School D1. Therefore, Donald gained +1 in Figure 5.10 which attempts to illustrate their acculturation process in this regard. Donald's experience in School D1, a band 3 school, has helped him preparing for the teaching at School D2, which

is supposed to be a band 2 school. Therefore, Donald is given another + 1 on this aspect.

All the other subjects have not taught in a low-banding school before, so they are all given 0 on this aspect.

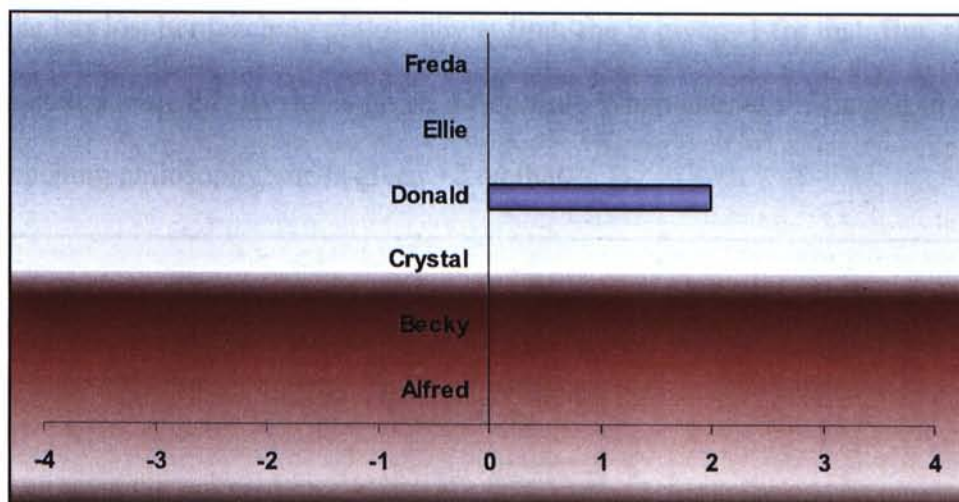


Figure 5.10 Effect of experience at low-banded schools on acculturation

5.2.5.5 Teaching Philosophy

Upon contacting the new culture in Hong Kong secondary schools, some of the subjects experienced changes in their teaching philosophy. These changes vary from minor changes to major changes.

As mentioned before in Chapter 5, Alfred and Crystal experienced no change at all in their teaching philosophy. That should have promoted acculturation. Therefore, they are given +2 in Figure 5.11 below.

Becky and Donald experienced slight changes but they can still maintain most of their teaching philosophy. Therefore, they are given + 1 on this aspect.

Ellie, who has undergone a lot of changes in her teaching philosophy, has become very much like a LET. Therefore, she is given -2 on this aspect.

Freda has lost her teaching philosophy at first. However, the ways she taught

then was the way she was taught when she was at school. In other word, she has not taken up the teaching methodology of a LET. Towards the end of the first year, Freda managed to regain her teaching philosophy and starting from the beginning of the second year, she felt that her teaching was very much what she wanted to see. As she has lost her teaching philosophy at first, she is given -1 for that. But, she has not imitated the LET, so she is given +1 on this. When she was managed to regain her teaching philosophy, she is given +2 on that.

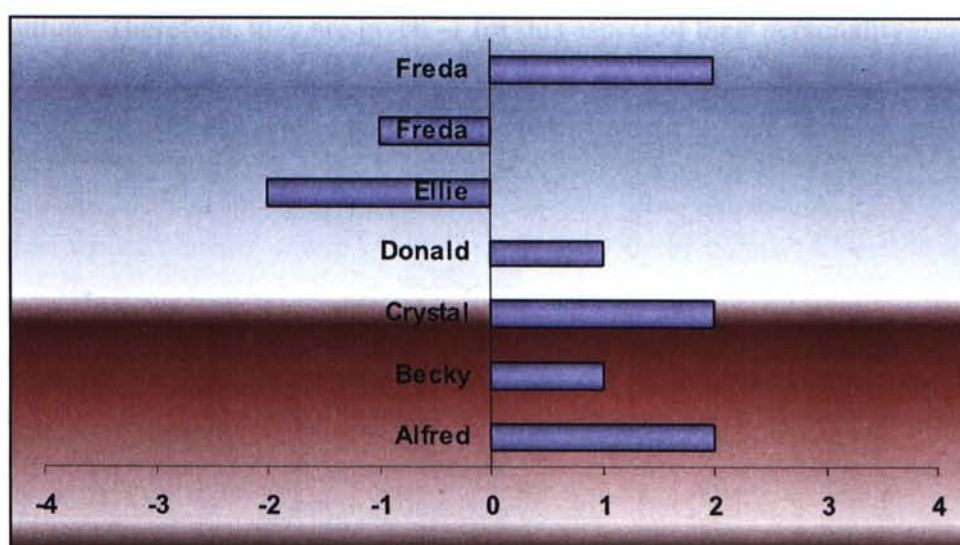


Figure 5.11 Effect of teaching philosophy on acculturation

5.2.6 Personality

Personality affects how quickly and well people acculturate. Basically, there are two main features of personality that are related to acculturation. First is people's willingness to actively extend themselves towards strangers. Second is the tolerance for ambiguity.

Alfred, Becky and Crystal used the word "outgoing" to describe themselves. During different interviews, all of them have mentioned that they enjoy making new friends and talking to new people. This trait should facilitate acculturation and they are given +2 on this aspect as shown below in Figure 5.12.

As all the subjects volunteered to participate in this study by filling in the reply slip after the researcher's presentation, it is not surprising that this trait is found amongst all of them.

On the other hand, Donald, Ellie and Freda preferred to listen and observe until they become more comfortable with the people around them. Although this may help them avoid making certain mistakes and even be culturally appropriate in many circumstances, it slows down their ability to make new friends in the new culture. Therefore, they are given -1 for this aspect of their personality.

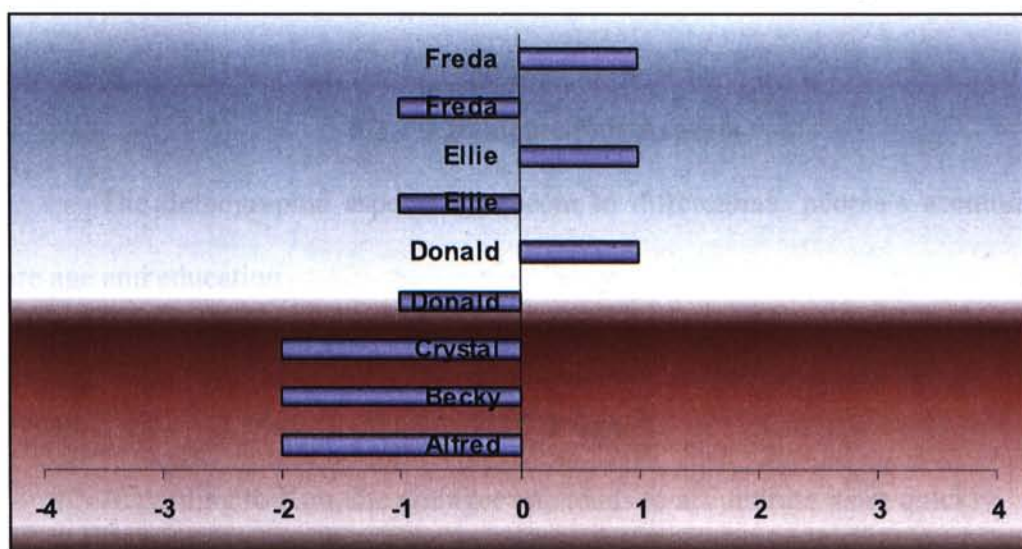


Figure 5.12 Effect of openness on acculturation

All the subjects except Becky and Crystal have used “flexible” to describe themselves. As they enjoy the unexpected, flexibility should help their acculturation efforts, so they are given +1 in Figure 5.13 which portrays the effect of flexibility on acculturation.

Becky and Crystal, on the other hand, have lower tolerance of ambiguity. They tend to have strong desire for certainty in their lives. Both of them like to have things planned out and prefer to get right to the point. They were often frustrated by the way some of their colleagues' ambiguous ways of responding. Therefore, they are given -1 on this aspect.

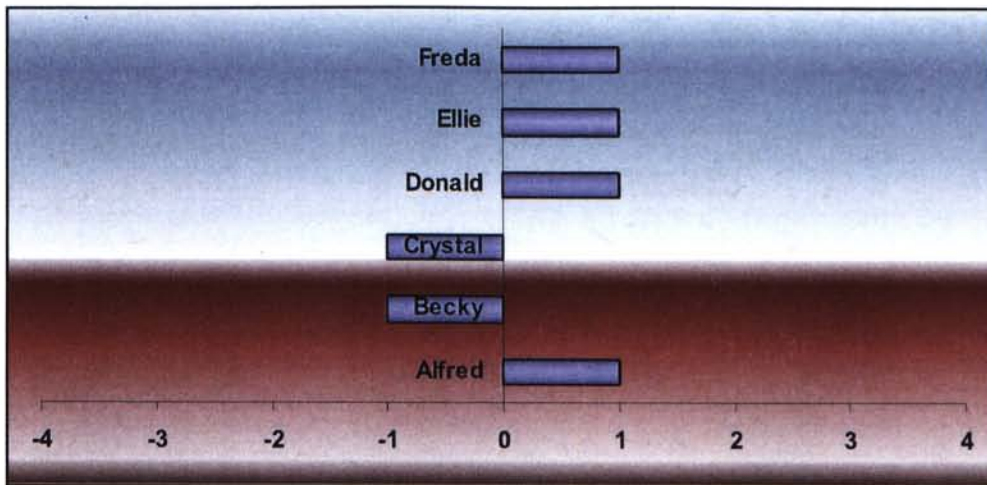


Figure 5.13 Effect of tolerance for ambiguity on acculturation

5.2.7 Demographic Aspects

The demographic aspects that seem to differentiate people's acculturation are age and education.

5.2.7.1 Age

According to Kim, the younger one tends to acculturate more quickly.

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
Age	56	25	50	35	38	37

Table 5.3 Age

As shown in the table above, Becky is given +3 on this aspect as she is in her twenties. Donald, Ellie and Freda are given +2 because they are all in their 30s. Alfred and Crystal are given -2 as they are in their 50s already. The explanation is that younger people are less ingrained in their own cultural ways and so are more open to change. As a result, that would promote growth in acculturation.

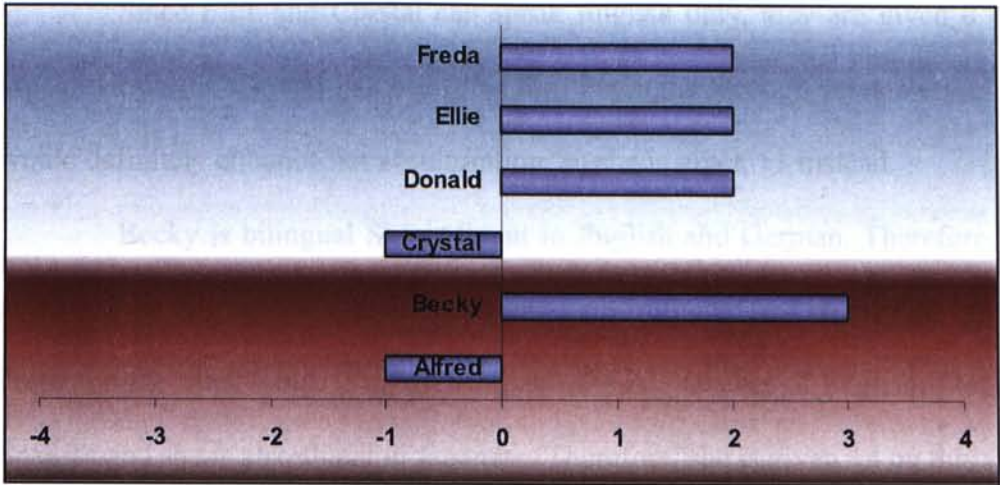


Figure 5.14 Effect of age on acculturation

5.2.7.2 Education

Education is not only referring to the higher education at a college or university where subjects are studied at an advanced level. Instead, education is treated very broadly here. It includes intercultural experiences and language ability. As intercultural experiences was already discussed in the previous section, only language ability and higher education will be discussed as follows.

5.2.7.2.1 Language Ability

	Alfred	Becky	Crystal	Donald	Ellie	Freda
Language spoken	English, German, French	English, German	English,	English, Spanish, Japanese	English	English, French, Spanish, Japanese
Language being studied			Putongha		French	

Table 5.4 Language abilities

As shown in the table above, two of the subjects are monolingual while the others are multilingual.

Since Ellie and Crystal can speak English only, they are given 0 on this aspect. However, Crystal has been learning Putongha through private lessons; this would definitely enhance her acculturation, so she is given +1 instead.

Becky is bilingual She is fluent in English and German. Therefore, she is given + 2 on this aspect. Alfred and Donald are trilingual and so they are given +3. Freda, on the other hand, is quarter-lingual: she is a teacher of English, French and Spanish and she is also fluent in Japanese. Therefore, she is given +4 on this aspect.

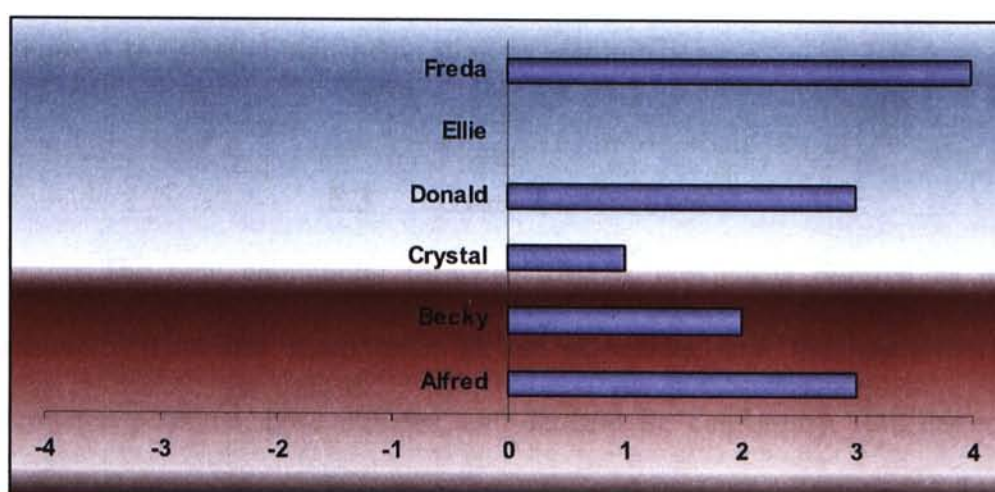


Figure 5.15 Effect of language abilities on acculturation

5.2.7.2.2 Higher Education

All the subjects have a bachelor degree and teaching qualification. Donald is the only one who was holding a master degree in TESOL. Therefore, he is given +2, while all the other five subjects are given +1 on this aspect. It is believed that a highly education person has learned many ways to look at problems or issues and he or she is not as limited in the outlook. Therefore, being more educated would enhance acculturation.

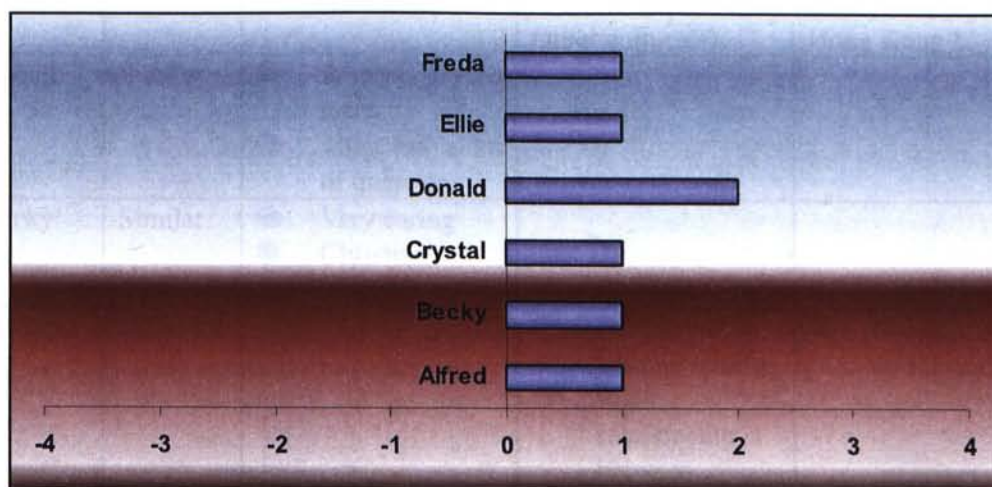


Figure 5.16 Effect of higher education on acculturation

5.3 Host Environment

The new community to which one is moving is referred as the host community. Kim has listed three factors associated with the host environment: interaction potential, host attitudes, and demand for conformity. Hall has modified Kim's model by including host similarity.

5.3.1 Host Similarity

Host similarity refers to how closely the host culture corresponds to the culture of the stranger. The greater the correspondence, the more likely growth or acculturation will occur. Obviously, Australian culture, American culture and Canadian culture are very different from Chinese culture. Therefore, only the differences in terms of school culture will be discussed.

		Similarities	Differences	
			Other culture(s)	Hong Kong
Alfred	Similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students try to learn They ask a lot of questions 		
Becky	Similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very caring Christian schools 		
Crystal	Different		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dictatorial administration Poor relationship between teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social, warm and friendly
Donald	Different		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dysfunctional no learning culture at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hierarchical well-organized busy
Ellie	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on academic performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on empathy, understanding, cooperation and tolerance between 50 different nationalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on individual performance
Freda	Both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> group-oriented (Japan and Hong Kong) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> higher motivation in Canada students are more responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor motivation students are less responsible

Table 5.5 Subjects' views towards different school cultures

As shown in the table above, Alfred and Becky found the school culture in their current schools to be similar to what they have previously experienced. This is a favorable trait for acculturation to take place. Therefore, they are given +3 on this aspect.

School A is the only school that orders the classes with Chinese characters. In other word, instead of having F.1A, F.1B, School A has F.1 Love, F.1Charity etc. Alfred's teaching schedule was written in Chinese. English translation was available in his first year. But, Alfred has decided to learn all the vocabulary written on his schedule. In his second year, he used a Chinese schedule like most of his colleagues

did. The effort he has put in to learn these Chinese characters has helped adaptation. So, he is given +4 instead.

The school culture that Crystal has experienced previously is different from that in School C. The change seems to be a positive one even though differences exist. Therefore, she is given +1 on this aspect.

One of Ellie's old schools has put quite a lot of emphasis on academic performance. However, the situation is not as "extreme" as in Hong Kong (Ellie interview 2). That helps to prepare her to adapt to the examination-oriented environment in Hong Kong. So, +1 is given for this trait, which helps enhancing acculturation. The other emphasizes of these schools are very different. The focus on the students seem to be completely opposite. One is very much collectivist and the other is more individualistic. This trait may inhibit acculturation, so -2 is given on this.

Freda has compared the school cultures in Canada, Japan and Hong Kong. She found the school culture of Japan similar to that of Hong Kong especially since the students are group-oriented. This similarity will help acculturation and so +2 is given. However, the students in Hong Kong seem to contrast with her students in Canada in terms of their motivation and responsibilities. Therefore, -2 is given for this trait as it might encourage hibernation instead of acculturation.

Unlike Freda, Donald was not comparing the school culture in Hong Kong with what he experienced in other countries. He was comparing the school culture he experienced in School D1 and School D2. At the time when the second interview took place, Donald has spent around six weeks in School D2 only. He seems to view the school culture in School D2 positively, so he is given +1 on this aspect.

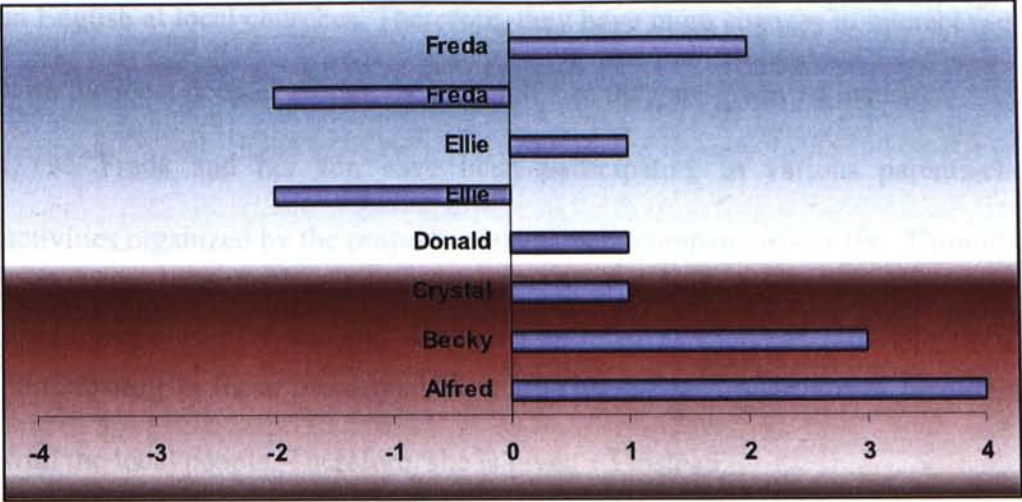


Figure 5.17 Host similarity and acculturation

5.3.2 Interaction Potential

The second aspect of the host environment that influences the acculturation process is the amount of opportunities for interaction with host culture members.

	Apartment in the New Territories	Apartment in Kowloon	Apartment in expatriate community
Alfred	✓		
Becky	1 st Year	2 nd Year	
Crystal	1 st Year	2 nd & 3 rd Year	
Donald	✓		
Ellie			✓
Freda	✓		

Table 5.6 Location of subjects’ apartments

As shown in the table above, most of the subjects have similar interaction potential with the host culture members, so they are given +2 on this aspect. Ellie, however is given -2 since she is living in an expatriate community where she has very limited chances to interact with the local people.

Becky and Crystal are Christians. They attend fellowship which is conducted

in English at local churches. Therefore, they have more chances to interact regularly with the local people through their church. So, they are given +4 instead.

Freda and her son have been participating in various parents-children activities organized by the property management company of her flat. Through these activities, she can meet more neighbors. As she is living in a local community, participating in these occasional events increases her opportunities for interacting with the local people. Therefore, she is given +3 instead.

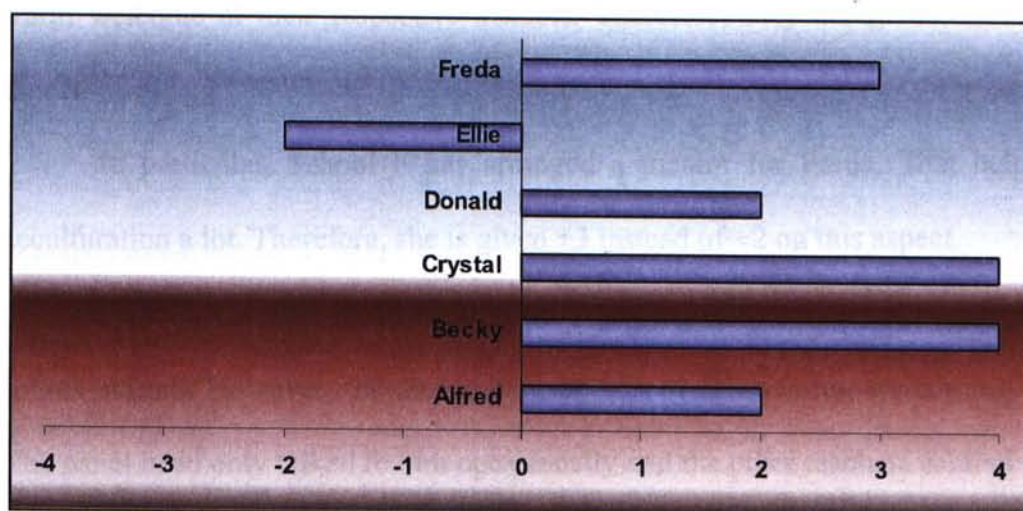


Figure 5.18 Interaction potential and acculturation

5.3.3 Host Attitudes

The current study has not interviewed the principal or the LETs of the schools involve because of time constraints. As a result, the data obtained on host attitudes are mainly from three sources: newspaper articles, interview with the EMB officer and the subjects' perceptions of host attitudes.

By host attitudes, it refers to the attitudes of the host community toward either the stranger's home community or the stranger's gender. Because the subjects of the current study are all NETs, the attitudes of the host community toward the

NETs' position would be taken into account. The differences would affect the speed and quality of acculturation.

The EMB believes that the NET scheme is "a very innovative" and "daring" initiative of the Government. In other words, its attitudes towards the NETs are very positive.

Alfred, Becky, Crystal, Ellie and Freda were formally introduced to the whole school on the first day of school. They were all introduced to the members of the staff during the annual staff meeting in August. All of them were given a very warm welcome at their respective schools. Therefore, they are given +2 on this aspect.

In particular, School F has arranged a mentor for Freda. That helps her acculturation a lot. Therefore, she is given +3 instead of +2 on this aspect.

Donald was introduced to the staff during the staff meeting in August before school started. However, the atmosphere of School D1 was not welcoming at all. The panel head only talked to him occasionally and the other teachers seldom talked to him. That negative attitudes made it difficult for Donald to acculturate. So, -2 is given on this aspect.

In School D2, he was given very warm welcome before the summer holiday began. The staff were quite friendly, especially the ELTA there. The positive attitudes promote Donald's desire to acculturate. Because of this trait, he is given +3 on this aspect.

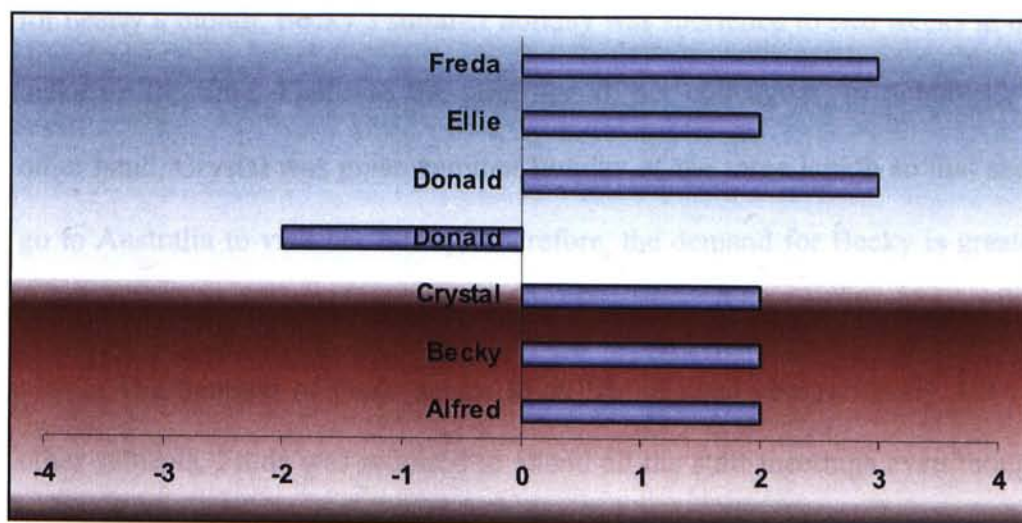


Figure 5.19 Host attitudes and acculturation

5.3.4 Demand for Conformity

The final factor to consider related to the host environment is the demand for conformity. In other words, it refers to the amount of pressure exists within a community for a stranger to acculturate. The greater the demand, the better the acculturation.

During Alfred's first year, he was the only foreigner in his school. Because he was not the first NET in his school, he found that his colleagues expect him to act a bit differently. Amongst the staff, the demand was not great. On the other hand, some of Alfred's students have told him that they have never seen a foreigner. In terms of the school administration, Alfred does not enjoy any special privilege. He has been treated the same as his local colleagues. But generally speaking, he did not feel too much pressure to conform. Therefore, he is given +1.

The demand of Becky and Crystal is quite similar. Their schools expected them to attend every meeting like the way the LETs did even though some of the meetings were conducted in Cantonese. In terms of school administration, Becky has been treated like a local teacher. Because of SARS, school has been suspended

for nearly a month. Becky's summer holiday was shortened to two weeks in order to make up the time. That was the same for all her colleagues. In School C, on the other hand, Crystal was given summer holiday of the same length so that she could go to Australia to visit her family. Therefore, the demand for Becky is greater than that for Crystal. So, Becky is given +2 and Crystal is given +1.

The demand of Freda seems to be the smallest comparatively. Like all the other subjects, Freda was required to attend all the staff meetings even though they were all conducted in Cantonese. She was also given holiday duties which interrupted her holiday and made her trip to Canada a lot shorter. As the principal of School F has attempted to treat all the members of staff equally, the special need of Freda's was ignored. As a result, pressure to conform exists. She is given +1 on this aspect. All her lessons are taught as a team with LETs, her students expected her teaching to be very different. Her partners are very open to new ideas. Since Freda did not have to worry about the discipline, she can carry out the lessons in the desired way. As a result, she has no pressure to conform in terms of teaching. Therefore, she is given -2 on this aspect.

Ellie and Donald, on the other hand, have encountered enormous amount of pressure to conform, especially inside the classroom. Both of them preferred a less formal relationship with the students. They have tried to abandon the traditional way of greeting the teacher. But, discipline problems arisen, which, they believed, was due to the change in formality. Then, they had no choice but to maintain the original level of formality like a local teacher. The maturity level of their students was a lot lower than they have expected. They had to discipline the class with shouting or even losing their temper, which was a rare strategy used elsewhere. Both of them have experienced handling students with behavioral problems in their home countries, but they still encountered difficulties with discipline. As mentioned

before, the large class size, the homogeneous grouping of students and the language barriers are some of the factors contributing to the discipline problems. Punishment, a common strategy adopted by local teachers, was frequently used. Upon contacting the new school culture, some of the NETs might have lost their teaching philosophy. Freda, for example, has lost her teaching philosophy at first and she found herself resorting to the strategies used to manage the class when she was a student (Freda interview 2). These strategies were mainly punishment. In Donald's case, he has tried every mean he could think of to manage the class and punishment was viewed as the only method which might still be effective. As a result, they found themselves behaving increasingly like a local teacher. That implies the great demand for conformity, so they are given +4 on this aspect.

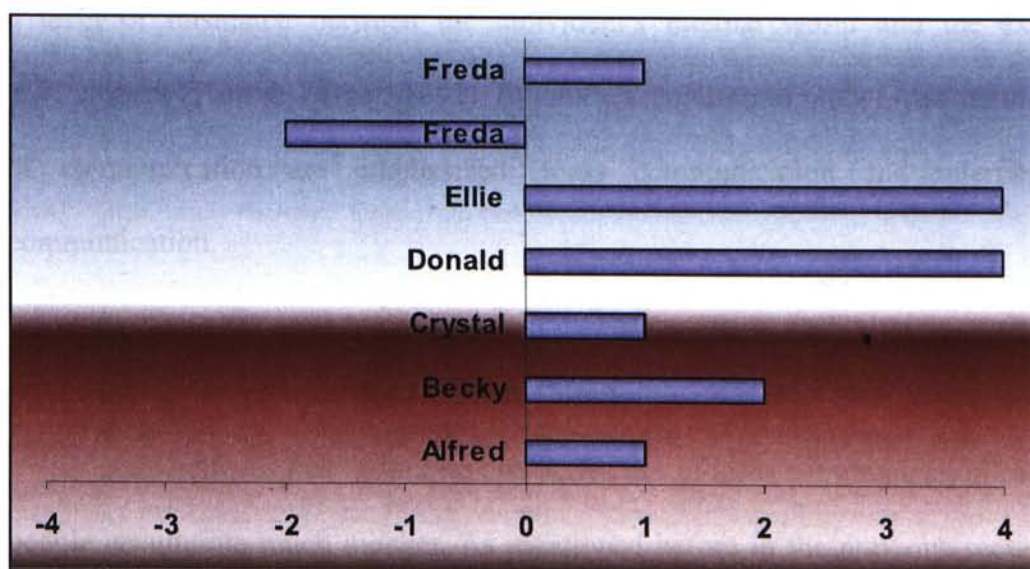


Figure 5.20 Demand for conformity

5.4 Communication

The term communication is defined broadly to include “all activities of message exchange between an individual and the environment” (Kim, 2002). In each culture, people form bonding with each other through a common system of encoding and decoding. Kim believes that cultures vary in both verbal and

non-verbal behavior. The latter includes the manners of movement, ways of sitting, standing and gesturing, postures, tones of voice, facial expressions as well as ways of handling time, space and materials (Kim, 2002). It is culture that helps members of the society to interpret the verbal and nonverbal messages. Culture works like a framework in the sense that it shapes the way people think, feel behave in varied forms. Frank (1975) describes the inseparable relationship between culture and communication as “arising from the patterned transactional relations” (p.128) of all individuals, each of whom carries on continual interactions with other members of the group. People are programmed with culture to make judgment on their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that is accepted and expected by others in a given society below the level of conscious thought. Therefore, maladaptation implies a level of mismatch between the individual’s internal world and the external environment (Ford & Lerner, 1992). In Kim’s acculturation model, two main types of communication are emphasized: mass communication and interpersonal communication.

5.4.1 Mass Communication

Kim believes that the access and active use of mass communication can help people acculturate much quicker. As mentioned before in the previous section, all the subjects of this study were extremely busy. Therefore, they have limited contact with the mass media.

All the subjects of this study read the *South China Morning Post* for more than three times per week. Some of them have subscribed to the newspaper through school. Some of them read the communal copy available in the staff common room. All of them watch the news on television occasionally. However, none of them except Donald and Ellie have attempted to watch the television programs of the

Cantonese channels. Even though it is very difficult for them to understand due to the language barrier, they still have tried. Freda has tried to watch the children's programs on the English channels with her son although not all of them are made locally. Based on the time and attention each person pays to local mass communication outlets, Freda gets a +4, Donald and Ellie get a +3 and the others get +1 on this aspect.

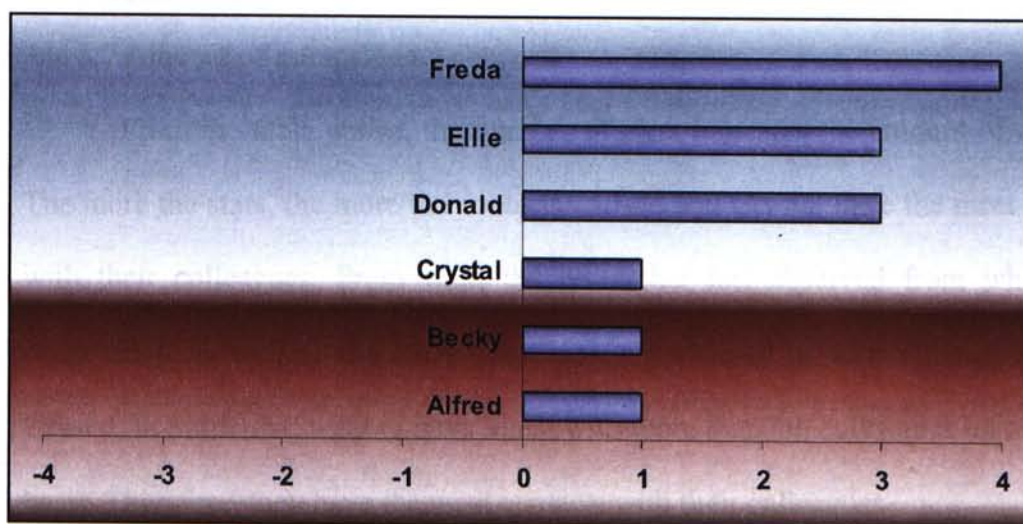


Figure 5.21 Effect of mass communication on acculturation

5.4.2 Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is viewed as a mark of acculturation and Hall believes that it is the most crucial factor in the acculturation process (Hall, 2001). There are two major aspects related to interpersonal communication: i) sheer number of interpersonal contacts and, ii) the existence of a high degree of intimacy in at least one of these contacts. Intimacy refers to the ability to share with each other serious concerns in a supportive and honest manner (Hall 2001; Kim, 2002).

5.4.2.1 Amount of Interpersonal Contacts

	Teachers	Non-teaching staff	Students	NESTA	Total
Alfred	★★★	★	★★	★★	8
Becky	★★	★★★	★★★	★★	10
Crystal	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★	11
Donald	★	★	★	★★	5
Ellie	★★	★	★★	★★	7
Freda	★★	★	★★★	0	6

Table 5.7 Amount of interpersonal contacts

From the table above, the number of stars indicates the amount of contact. The more the stars, the more the contacts. Alfred and Crystal have the most contact with their colleagues. From what the researcher has observed from whole-day observation as well as the three interviews, they talked to their colleagues a lot. Crystal, in particular, went to have lunch with more than ten colleagues on a regular basis. Therefore, they have the most contacts with their colleagues.

Becky, Ellie and Freda have similar amount of contact with their colleagues. The amount is less than that of Alfred’s and Crystals’. One of the possible reasons is their schedule. As their schedules are tighter than that of Alfred and Crystals, they spent significantly less time in the staff room, which limits the amount of contact they have with their colleagues.

Donald, on the other hand, is new to School D2. During observation, Donald was found to be alone most of the time. During recess and lunch time, he seldom talked to his colleagues. Therefore, he has the least contact with his colleagues.

Becky and Crystal have relatively quite a lot of contact with the non-teaching staff. By non-teaching staff, it includes the auxiliary staff, the staff of the general office as well as the janitors. Crystal practiced Cantonese phrases with the auxiliary staff at her school while the non-teaching staff likes to practice English

with Becky. Therefore, they scored the highest in this aspect.

Becky and Freda have the most frequent contact with their students. Becky had lunch with her students on a weekly basis. As for Freda, she invited her students to visit her baby at home. Sometimes, she invited them to cook together. During observation, several students volunteered to walk Freda home. As a result, they have the most contact with their students outside the classroom.

Alfred, Crystal and Ellie have less frequent contact with their students outside the classroom. Occasionally, they have lunch with their students. Sometimes, their students would talk to them if they encounter each other in the corridor. But most of the time, the students went away after greeting them. Therefore, they have less contact with their students outside the classroom.

Donald was new to School D2. The only students he has contact with were the English society committee members. As a result, Donald's contact with his students at School D2 was very limited. At School D1, he went out to have lunch with his senior students several times a month. But, that has not happened at School D2 yet.

All the subjects, except Freda, are members of the NESTA. Freda has only attended the orientation in the summer but not any other activities. Therefore, basically she has no contact with NESTA after school has started.

Crystal is an active member of NESTA. She attends the monthly meeting regularly and she participated in the activities organized by NESTA. Apart from that, she actively reads the post of the NESTA e-group, which works like a newsgroup. Therefore, she has the most contact with NESTA.

Alfred, Becky, Donald and Ellie on the other hand, are less active. They attended some of the Professional Development Day but they rarely attend the NESTA meetings. Although they have subscribed to the NESTA e-group, they

seldom read the posts. As a result, their contact with NESTA is a lot less.

5.4.2.2 Quality of Interpersonal Contacts

The quality of interpersonal contacts amongst the subjects varies a lot. Except Donald, all the subjects of this subject have managed to establish mid-level friendship with some of their colleagues. Although they felt close to them at one level, but at another level, they did not feel that she has truly become close with any of them. Therefore, Alfred and Crystal are given +1 on this aspect.

Becky, Ellie and Freda have moved beyond the above stage. They have managed to establish a closer relationship with at least one of their colleagues. Ellie can talk about things of the personal level with her panel head. Freda can talk to her mentor of the same level of intimacy. Becky can talk to two of her colleagues in terms of her personal feelings, school matters and spiritual health like a family.

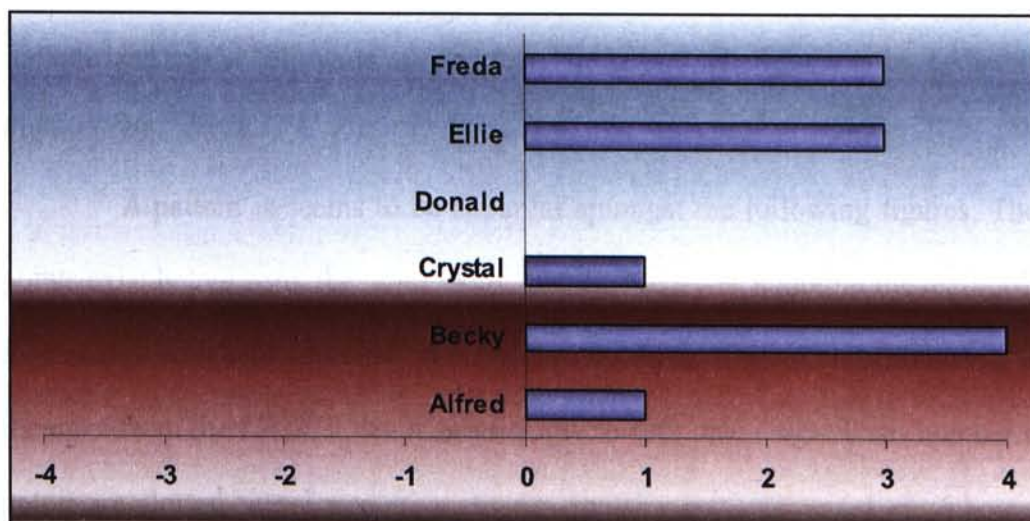


Figure 5.22 Effect of quality of colleagues relationship on acculturation

Because of the students' level of English, most of the subjects felt that they could not develop a relationship with their students like what they have desired. Therefore, they are given -1 on this aspect. However, Becky's students have approached her to talk about family problems, emotional problems as well as some

other issues on relationship. This shows that Becky has gained the trust from her students and the intimacy between them. Therefore, she is given +4 on this aspect.

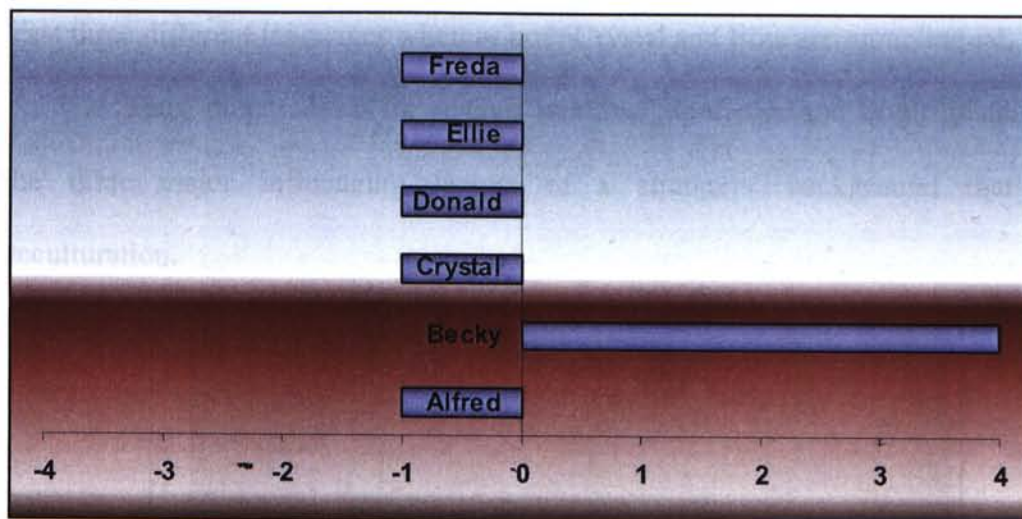


Figure 5.23 Effect of quality of relationship with students on acculturation

5.5 Conclusion

Factors affecting the acculturation of the subjects' acculturation are summarized in the following six figures. The key to the figures is immediately after Figure 5.29.

A pattern is seems to be apparent amongst the following figures. The more points exist below zero, the more likely that the NET was adopting the textbook based, examination-oriented approach to classroom teaching. Crystal and Ellie have adopted the most from the LETs, it is not surprisingly to find that a significant number of their points are plotted below zero.

On the other hand, Alfred and Freda have managed to maintain their own teaching philosophy, only a few of their points are plotted below zero. There are several common characteristics shared by Alfred and Freda but not by Crystal and Ellie: (i) Both Alfred and Freda have done preparation before coming to Hong Kong whereas Crystal and Ellie have not. (ii) Both Alfred and Freda have oversea teaching

experience in a homogeneous classroom setting. However, Crystal and Ellie were in lack of this experience. (iii) Both Alfred and Freda are multilingual, they can speak at least three different languages whereas both Crystal and Ellie are monolingual.

Thus, preparedness for change, working experience and language ability are the three major influencing factors of a strangers' background that affect acculturation.

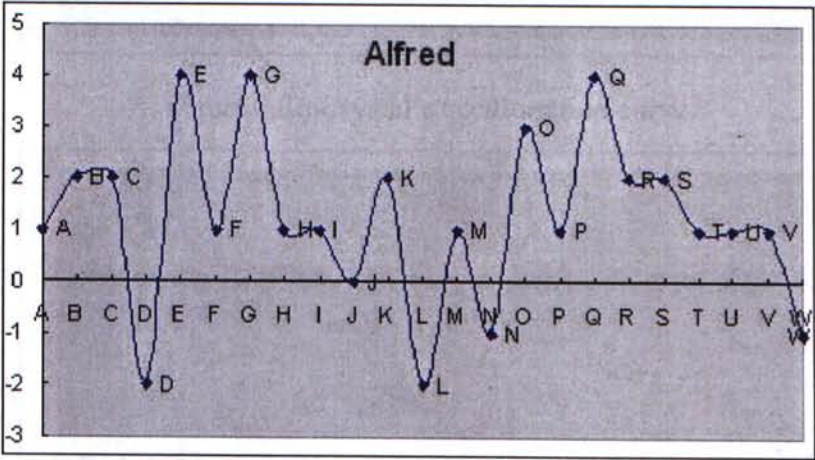


Figure 5.24 Alfred's acculturation curve

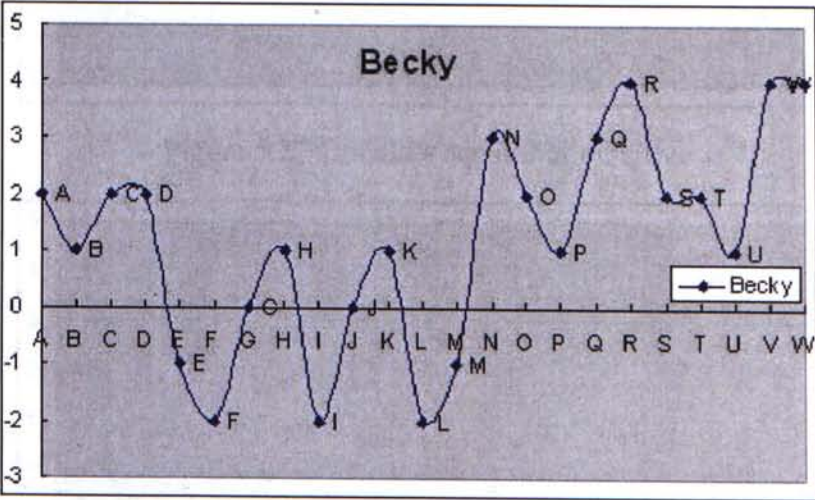


Figure 5.25 Becky's acculturation curve

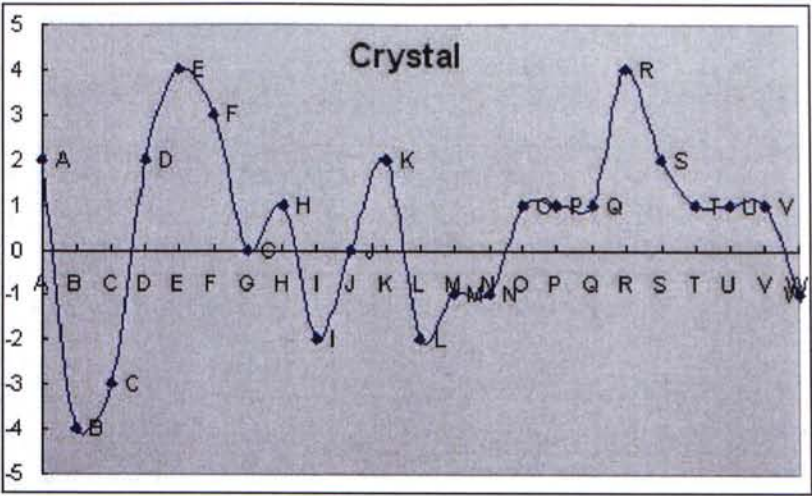


Figure 5.26 Crystal's acculturation curve

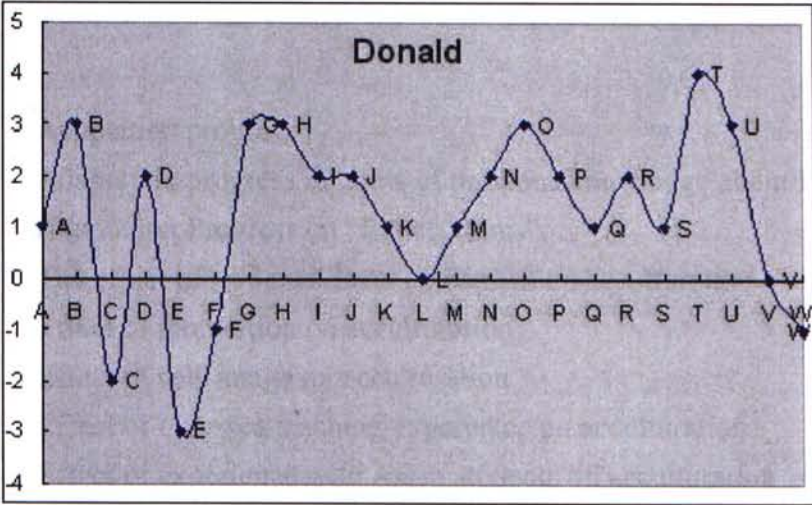


Figure 5.27 Donald's acculturation curve

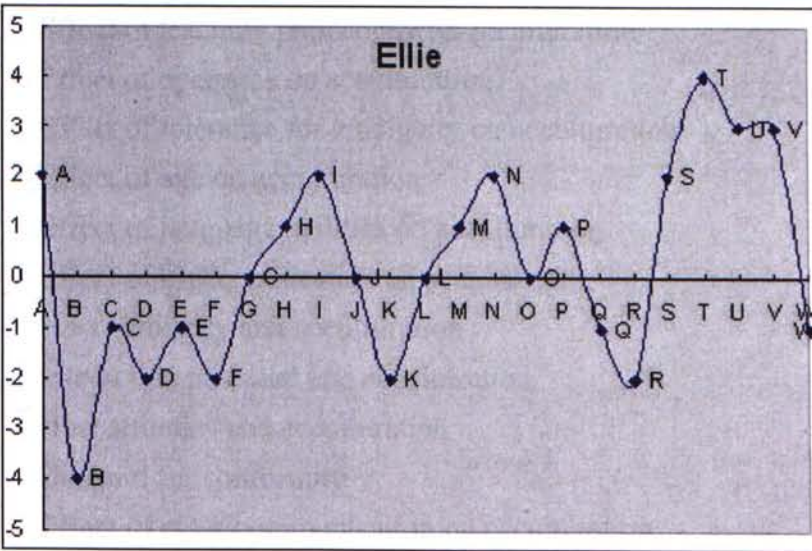


Figure 5.28 Ellie's acculturation curve

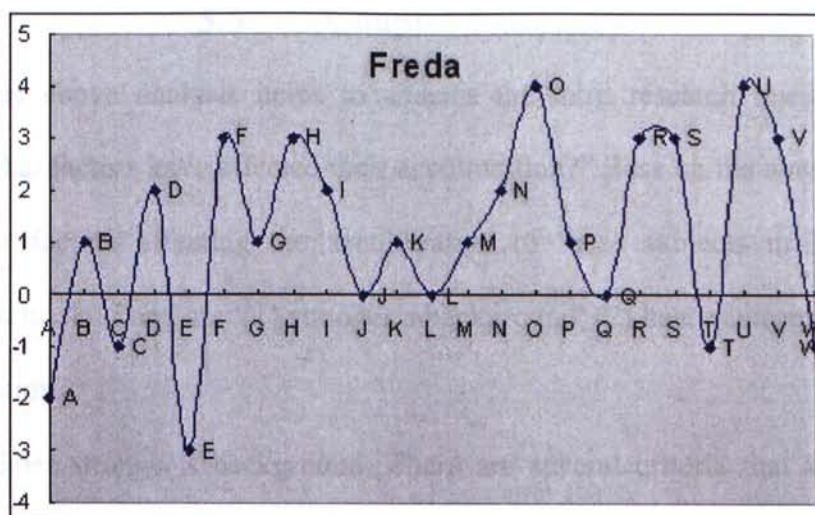


Figure 5.29 Freda's acculturation curve

Key:

- A Adaptation progress
- B Adaptation progress in terms of previous knowledge about Hong Kong
- C Adaptation Progress on "Expectations"
- D The effect of students' level of English on acculturation
- E Effect of motivation on acculturation
- F Effect of self-image on acculturation
- G Effect of over-sea teaching experience on acculturation
- H Effect of experience with Asian students on acculturation
- I Effect of experience of homogeneous grouping on acculturation
- J Effect of experience at low-banded schools on acculturation
- K Effect of teaching philosophy on acculturation
- L Effect of openness on acculturation
- M Effect of tolerance for ambiguity on acculturation
- N Effect of age on acculturation
- O Effect of language abilities on acculturation
- P Effect of higher education on acculturation
- Q Host similarity and acculturation
- R Interaction potential and acculturation
- S Host attitudes and acculturation
- T Demand for conformity
- U Effect of mass communication on acculturation
- V Effect of quality of colleagues relationship on acculturation
- W Effect of quality of relationship with students on acculturation

5.6 Chapter Summary

The above analysis helps to address the third research question of this study – “What factors have affected their acculturation?” Base on the above, there are three major factors affecting the acculturation of these subjects in Hong Kong secondary schools. They are: (1) stranger’s background, (2) host environment and (3) communication.

Under stranger’s background, There are several criteria that would affect acculturation: (i) The subjects’ preparation for the new school culture can be reflected through the amount of contact they have with the previous NET of their schools, the knowledge they have about Hong Kong or the education system in particular. The more they have found out about the host culture, the more likely they will have a more realistic picture of what to expect. (ii) Their expectations have affected their acculturation, too. Since some of them experienced disappointment from their expected roles and their expected level of students’ English. (iii) Their motivation for acculturating can be reflected through their goals. For example, Alfred and Crystal were aiming at teaching at the remote area in China whereas Becky and Ellie would like to gain experience teaching oversea and then go back to Australia. The differences in their motivation can affect their degree of acculturation. (iv)The flexibility of the subjects’ identity has also affected their acculturation through whether they are risk-taking or not. A strong self-image would enable the subjects to be more risk-taking and enhance their willingness to try new things. (v)Their previous teaching experience has affected their acculturation through their previous intercultural teaching experience, their experience with Asian students, their experience in a homogeneous grouped classroom, experience in low ability schools as well as their insistence on their teaching philosophy. (vi)Personality affects the degree of acculturation through their willingness to actively extend themselves towards

strangers and their tolerance of ambiguity. (vii) Some of the demographic aspects of the subjects have promoted their acculturation. They include age, language ability and higher education.

The second major factor that has affected the subjects' acculturation is the host environment. It includes: (i) host similarity – the more similarity between the host and the original environment, the more likely acculturation will occur, (ii) interaction potential – the opportunities available for interacting with the local people in the host culture, (iii) host attitude – the attitude held by the host culture towards the subjects, and (iv) demand for conformity – the amount of pressure exists in the host community for the strangers to acculturate.

The final major factor that has affected their acculturation is communication. The two aspects of communication are mass communication and interpersonal communication. The access and active use of mass communication can help the subjects to acculturate quicker (Kim, 2001). The quantity and quality of the interpersonal contacts are also taken into account.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter begins with a summary of the research questions, of the methodology used in the study, and of the findings of the study. The chapter ends with the limitations and implications of the study, as well as with suggestions for further research.

6.2 Summary of the Research Questions, Methodology, and Findings

This study was motivated by the research on the adaptation of newly-arrived NETs in Hong Kong. The study, conducted by Chu (1999), found that the greatest challenges the newly-arrived NETs face in Hong Kong were large class size, disciplinary problems, students' low level of English and their lack of motivation.

These complaints are commonly faced by LETs, especially the new teachers. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out whether these problems are unique of the newly-arrived LETs. As adaptation problems hinder NET's experience at schools, it is essential to find ways to make use of their full potential by helping them to adapt better. Following this line of questioning, the major outcome of this study is to have a better understanding of the problems encountered by NETs.

This study fulfilled the research questions stated in Chapter Two, to identify: (1) the challenges faced by NETs in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools, (2) the strategies they used to overcome those challenges, (3) the factors that have affected their degree of acculturation, and (4) the possible ways in which NETs could better adapt socioculturally to Hong Kong's secondary schools.

As shown in Chapter Three, the methodology used in this study consisted of

questionnaire, interview, observation and post-observation interview. Case studies can (1) “explain the presumed casual links in real-life interventions”, (2) “describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred” (3) “illustrate certain topics within an evaluation” and (4) “be used to explore those situations, in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes” (Yin, 2003, p.15). However, one disadvantage is that case studies may take too long and result in massive, unreadable documents (Yin, 2003, p.11). It can be avoided by carefully designed interview guides.

After triangulating the data sources, the major findings reported in Chapters Four and Five are restated briefly as follows:

- (1) The problems encountered by the subjects can be classified into four major areas:
 - (i) students, (ii) administration, (iii) school culture, and (iv) communication. The problems related to students include: (a) large class size, (b) discipline, (c) students’ lack of motivation, (d) low level of English amongst students, and (e) students with special needs.

In terms of administration, the subjects encountered difficulties in coping: (a) the compulsory attendance of staff meeting, (b) protocol and procedures, and (c) evaluation of teaching.

Most of the problems are found under school culture. They include: (a) non-teaching duties, (b) workload, (c) stress, (d) streaming students, (e) changing classroom, (f) education philosophy, and (g) staff room atmosphere.

The last area of the problems is communication. Some of the subjects found it challenging to: (a) initiate communication, (b) tolerate the abruptness of both the colleagues and the students, and (c) communicate with the school and the EMB.

Thus, the above findings are the challenges encountered by the subjects in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong, which has addressed the first

research question of this study – What are the challenges faced by NETs in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools?

- (2) A lot of different strategies have been used by the subjects to overcome the above challenges. The main strategies will be outlined as follows:

Regarding the challenges related to students, one of the most commonly used strategies is insistence. The subjects had to insist on their own principles when dealing with the problems. For example, Crystal had to insist on not calling her students with their silly English names. In order to solve the discipline problems, three major strategies were used: i) asking for help from the discipline masters, ii) punishment, and iii) negotiation. Punishment includes handing out demerits, detentions and to do star jumps – jumping up from the kneeling down position with open arms. Some of the subjects have invited the local teachers to sit down and talk to the disruptive students together. Apart from the above, the subjects would not start teaching until the students are quiet. Some would nominate the students to answer their questions. On the other hand, some would carry on teaching ignoring the discipline problems.

Lack of motivation amongst the students has been a difficulty. In order to raise the students' motivation, the subjects have used a lot of games, small quick activities and one even adopt past examination paper as part of the teaching materials.

Students' low level of English has created difficulties in teaching. Some of the subjects have asked their colleagues to write down the Chinese translation to show their students. A lot of them have invited the students to shout out the Chinese translation of the particular difficult vocabulary so that the rest of the class could understand.

The special needs of the students range from visually impaired, emotional

problems to behavioral problems. The subjects have referred these students to the counselor. But for the visually impaired student, the subject had to design a separate set of teaching materials for her.

Regarding the administration, tolerance has been used as the main strategy. To overcome the problems of coping with the protocol and procedures of doing things at schools, some of the subjects have solved the problems by seeking approval from the person at the top of the power hierarchy.

Regarding the problems related to the school culture, tolerance was again, the main strategy used.

Regarding the problems related to communication, the subjects had to be more initiative and active in order to initiate communication with their colleagues. When dealing with the abruptness of the colleagues and students, the subjects had observed and asked for others' opinions. Eventually, tolerance was again adopted.

The above findings summarize the strategies used by the subjects of this study to overcome their challenges, which has addressed the second research question of this study – What are the strategies they used to overcome the challenges arisen in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools?

(3) Factors found to be affecting the subjects' acculturation can be divided into three categories: (i) Stranger's Background, (ii) Host Environment, and (iii) Communication. Under Stranger's Background, the factors include (a) preparedness for change – previous knowledge about Hong Kong, preparation, contact with previous NETs, (b) expectations – the contrast between their expected roles and expected students' level of English and the reality, (c) motivation – the reason why they come to work as a NET, (d) identity flexibility – their tendency of risk-taking or not and their acceptance of trying

new things, (e) teaching experience – overseas teaching experience, experience with Asian students, experience in homogeneously grouped classrooms, experience in low-ability and low achieving schools and insistence of teaching philosophy, (f) personality – willingness to actively extend themselves towards strangers and the tolerance for ambiguity, and (g) demographic aspects – age and education.

Under Host Environment, the factors were further classified into four categories: (a) host similarity, (b) interaction potential, (c) host attitudes, and (d) demand for conformity.

Finally, Communication is further divided into two types: mass communication and interpersonal communication.

All the above are believed to be factors affecting the acculturation of the subjects. Thus, the third research question of this study has been addressed – What are the factors that have affected the subjects' degree of acculturation?

6.3 Implications

In order to help the NETs better adapt socioculturally to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools, the following suggestions can be considered:

1. The role of the NET in secondary schools should be clearly defined. As the EMB has claimed to have given the autonomy to the schools to decide the use of NETs, the NETs, the principles and the local English teachers should discuss the new roles played by the NETs together.
2. There should be an acceptable upper limit of the teaching load of NET. They should not be assigned to teach only oral lessons for all classes in the school and they should not be expected to conform to the stand practices of English teaching in the schools.

3. The NETs should be treated as a school-based resource person to promote English language learning and teaching within the school. Instead of just teaching like a LET or a phonic teacher, the expertise of the NETs should be utilized properly as follows:
 - Ⓢ Supporting the English panel in developing teaching materials for the use of students and teachers;
 - Ⓢ Supporting the English panel in promoting an English speaking culture inside and outside the classroom;
 - Ⓢ Initiating more English-related language and cultural activities for students;
 - Ⓢ Organizing workshops or seminars with LETs in a two-way interactive manner. The communication should be one-way either from NET to LET or vice-versa.
 - Ⓢ Collaborating with the LETs more actively through class observations or acting as a guest teacher in each other's classroom in a friendly and collegial manner where constructive suggestions can be exchanged afterward.
4. NETs should take up an active-role in English-related extra-curricular activities in order to enhance students' opportunities to participate in meaningful communication with them. The school should help encouraging students to take part in English-related extra-curricular activities.
5. NETs should be arranged to learn Chinese or Cantonese. Evidence reflected by Alfred, Donald and Freda shows that being able to speak the first language of the students will help them adapt quicker and better to the culture. NET would be able to contact the parents directly

without constantly relying on a middle-person as the translator.

6. NETs should be given a clear picture of the roles they are expected to play, the background of the school and the nature of the students before signing the contract.
7. The employment notices should be sent out at least two months earlier so that the NETs can have more time preparing for the change.
8. Support should be given to the NETs after they have started teaching in September. This includes class visiting from the EMB and providing a responsible mentor to take care of the NETs.
9. Mechanism should be installed to prevent the NETs from being misused. At the same time, a more effective evaluation system should exist so that the NETs can have a better sense of achievement, to appreciate the good work done by the hard-working NETs, to set good examples for the future NETs and to enhance the collaboration between NETs and LETs.
10. Additional orientation should be carried out within schools. The situation faced by each NET is unique. Having orientation at school level can help them better understand the school culture.
11. A senior teacher, preferably a LET should be arranged to be the mentor of the NET. So that NETs are kept informed of the new arrangement and news at schools. Evidence shown by Freda shows that having a mentor help to ease the helplessness and loneliness of newly-arrived NETs.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

Upon the completion of the study and gaining insights into the research

design, a number of possible limitations were discerned. These shortcomings are discussed below under Research Design and Sample.

6.4.1 Research Design

First, the greatest challenge faced by the researcher was the execution of the interviews and class observation in the local secondary school setting. There were many circumstances that the principles did not welcome the researcher to conduct research activities, i.e. interviews and observations on campus. Students and some of the subjects' colleagues did not feel at ease having a stranger observing them whenever they have contacts with the subjects. None of the class observations was audio-recorded as it was prohibited. Some of the principles have exerted pressure on the subjects as an effort to stop them from participating in this study. My research did observe the subjects for at least one whole day starting from the moment they started working at school. Observation enables the researcher to gain insight in the subjects' world. It can also enable the researcher to triangulate the data. The researcher has only carried out the observation towards the end of the data collection period due to the above reasons. Perhaps, it would be a better alternative to carry out more observation throughout the data collection period on a regular basis. It might be even better to have two hidden video cameras pre-installed in the classroom in order to minimize the effect of the presence of the researcher on the class.

Second, large scale questionnaire was not used in this study owing to the limitation of time and resources available. Learning from the previous studies, the response rate of sending the questionnaire by mail was very low. It might be a better alternative if the questionnaire could be administered in person at each secondary school with the NET.

Third, as the researcher has received no training in psychology, it was

impossible to carry out a formal personality test on the subjects to find out more about their personality. In order to overcome this problem, the subjects were asked to describe themselves and they were also asked to think how their friends would describe them. Then, through observation, the researcher could compare and contrast the observation with the description in order to triangulate the data.

6.4.2 Sample

The first challenge encountered by the researcher was the recruitment of subjects. SARS broke out during the recruitment process. Due to the number of SARS patients at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), the close relationship between the Prince of Wales' Hospital and CUHK and the fact that the researcher was from CUHK, around 35 NETs, 80% of those who have agreed to participate in this study in March, 2002 refused to be subjects of this study after SARS.

The second challenge encountered was the selection of subjects. The researcher has presented the proposal of this study twice at the Professional Development Day and the meeting of NESTA to recruit subjects. Most of the audience of the above two events were pioneer NETs (NETs who have been teaching in Hong Kong since the implementation of the NET scheme) or those who have been teaching for over three years. Therefore, it was a difficulty to find NETs that fit the criteria of the subjects of this study and at the same time, willing to participate in this study.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, four of the six NETs were Australians while the other two were American and Canadian. It is possible that NETs from other countries may think and behave differently.

Only one subject of the current study was teaching in an EMI school. It is possible that NETs from other EMI schools may have different experience or

encountered different difficulties.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

As the EMB has already set up an advisory team to provide support to NETs teaching in primary schools (PNETs), it would be fascinating to find out the differences between the adaptation problems faced by PNETs and NETs.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the concept of culture is a wide one. Further research can be carried out to examine the specific impact of school culture on NETs as well as the impact of NETs on school culture.

Further studies are needed to find out what types of personality will better adapt to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools through formal personality tests.

It would be very interesting to find out how the students are affected by NETs and to what extent they were affected. Factors affecting students' acculturation towards the NETs would be another important topic to explore in order to maximize the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the NET scheme.

6.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter Six begins with a summary of the research questions, methodology, and findings of the study. Next is a discussion on the limitations of the present study in terms of research design and sample. Then, the implications of ways to help NETs acculturate are offered. Finally, suggestions for future research concerning the impact of NETs on school culture and vice-versa are stated.

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Appendix A

Parallel Text – Alfred

Alfred

Alfred is a 56-year-old Australian who arrived in Hong Kong in August 2002. He likes talking to people, listening to what they have to say and being surrounded by others.

When Alfred was in Australia, he has heard that the previous NET at School A was leaving. So, he phoned the principal Ms A to convince her that he would be a good NET. He had a phone interview with Ms A and was interviewed by the EMB in Australia.

Alfred came to Hong Kong is because of his interest in Asian countries: “I’ve always been interested in teaching in an Asian country, which I haven’t taught in before,” (Alfred, interview 1). One of the jobs he has taken up in Australia was to develop materials for students who live in remote areas. He believes there is a great demand for that in China. Apart from the above, he has decided to take up the job for financial reasons.

Alfred has been teaching in School A, a Band 3 CMI secondary school in New Territories.

Previous Working Experience

Alfred started teaching when he was 22 years old in 1970. That is, he

has been teaching for 34 years. He started his career as a teacher of languages in Australia and then he spent three years teaching English as a second language in Germany where his classes were homogeneously grouped. Like the students in Hong Kong, the German students could converse in their first language – German. However, one major difference is that Alfred is fluent in German but not in Cantonese. Another difference is that the German students' level of English proficiency is much higher than that of Alfred's present students in Hong Kong.

After being an ESL teacher in Germany, Alfred went to work as a teacher as well as being a coordinator of English for Swiss teachers of English in Scotland. After that, he went back to Germany to teach in the Department of English in a university.

In 1981, he went back to Australia to teach English. Two years later, he started developing materials for language classes in addition to teaching. Eventually, he was promoted to be the head teacher of one school in 1990 and the principal of another school in 2000.

Alfred believes that he is coming to the end of his career, so he would like to be an advisor in Hong Kong or work in Beijing or Shanghai.

Expectations

Before commencing the job, Alfred has spoken to the principal and his friends who were working in Hong Kong. As part of the preparation, he collected as much teaching materials as possible to be brought with him. He has also read books about Hong Kong which were tailor-made for tourists.

Based on the information he obtained from his friends, he found that some NETs were very negative about the staff they worked with. Some even told him that their colleagues were not friendly. As a result, Alfred was pleasantly surprised to see that his colleagues are friendlier than he has been expecting. "They are more friendly than I had expected, so I'm very lucky," (Alfred, interview 1).

He has learned from his friends that classes would be larger than in Australia. He knew that the teaching style would be different: "the teaching style is a little bit conservative compared to Australia" (Alfred, interview 1).

In terms of his life other than teaching, he was expecting to do administrative duties but he was not expecting to have after-school responsibilities because it was not common in Australia.

Alfred expected the level of English of his students to be much better: "I was surprised that the level of English was so low," (Alfred, interview 1). He thought they would want to speak English more. However, they seem to be

more interested in writing. “They seem to think that speaking is not really an important part of learning English.”

Current Teaching Experience

In his first year, he had two full classes – Form 2 and Form 3. He also taught oral lessons for one F.4 and one F.5, two F.6s and one F.7. He had to teach two lessons per week for these five classes. As for extra-curricular activities, he was responsible for the English Society and the Speech Festival for the choral speaking. In School A, all the English teachers are responsible for one supplementary class every eight weeks. In this supplementary class, students can come to ask questions about English and to get help with their homework. Altogether, Alfred had to teach thirty-one 35-minute lessons in a 6-day cycle.

This year, however, is Alfred’s second year teaching at School A. His workload is more or less the same except he is teaching junior forms instead of the senior forms. The number of extra-curricular activities he is responsible for remains the same. Since his school has employed one more NET, Alfred has become the mentor of the new NET.

After returning from the summer holiday, his level of comfort is high, “90%” (Alfred, interview 2), as he has become more familiar with the school:

“I could only feel more comfortable because I have learned the school system and the school, the rules of the school they have. So, I feel more confident I think”.

For the new academic year (2003 – 2004), Alfred has several goals to achieve. First of all, he hopes he can have more students speaking more fluent English. He also hopes that the senior students he taught after school will do well in the A-level examination. Apart from that, he would like to see an improvement in students who are particularly weak in English. To reach these goals, he will not repeat the mistakes he made in the first year, such as going through the lesson too quickly.

Appendix B

Parallel Text – Becky

Becky

Becky is a 25-year-old Australian who arrived in Hong Kong in August 2002. She is an outgoing person who likes to have her privacy and independence, but she is also a worrier. Her friends would describe her as “a little bit moody” (Becky, interview 1), too. Becky has always wanted to live overseas and get some experience, which is the primary reason why she took up the NET job. Another reason is that she had a cousin living in Hong Kong. However, she had left before Becky arrived in Hong Kong.

Becky is now teaching in School B, a Band 1 EMI secondary school in the New Territories. Her career goals have changed since she has come to Hong Kong. Her career goals for teaching would be to go back to Australia in the field of ESL teaching as a coordinator or to run a language school. She has planned for a career change for a short while because she believes that having other jobs would allow her to bring in a lot more in her teaching. But, she would like to get more involved in English language teaching and to do a master’s degree in education.

Previous Working Experience

After receiving her degrees in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of

Education (Hons) in 2000, she worked as a full-time teacher in Australia for two years. There is no banding system in Australia but if the Hong Kong banding system is used, Becky described that school as being a low Band 2 or a high Band 3 school. In that school, taught English and German. She also taught drama and Christian living because it was a Christian school.

In the Australian school where she taught, there is a section which resembles an international school, and students who are non-native English speakers would attend extra English lessons. Becky taught South East Asian students there. Becky had also taught some Chinese students in her German class. They impressed her by working very hard: “I didn’t expect as high a standard. The Australian seem to be writing eight words in German and they [the Chinese students] would write forty words” (Becky, Interview 1).

Expectations

Becky’s cousin knew the previous NET of School B. The previous NET had given Becky an honest account of what she would be dealing with. As a result, her expectation and her experience was “a pretty good match” (Becky, interview 1).

She knew that the teaching style would be different: “a little bit less innovative” than she was used to (Becky, interview 1). She also knew about the

large class size. But she did not expect to find herself teaching drama in the ordinary classroom with so many desks and chairs. She also knew that she would be helping with professional development but thought “her role would be more respected” (Becky, interview 1).

She was expecting to prepare examination materials but she did not think she would have to do it for “fifty people” (Becky, interview 1).

In terms of the professional relationship with her colleagues, she knew that she would be working with them very closely. As for the social part of the relationship, she was not sure if it was possible or not. Again, her expectation matched with what she has experienced. In Becky’s first year at School B, she found herself “work[ing] pretty closely with the colleagues, but [they] never see each other socially” (Becky, Interview 1). In Becky’s second year, the situation is more or less the same: “They are very lovely. When you have birthday, they take you out to birthday. But, we don’t see each other in the weekend or anything like that,” (Becky Interview 2).

Before Becky has met her students School B, she thought their level of English would be terrible. But, after school started, this expectation proved to be wrong: “My current students, I think, have pretty good English. Although some of them have difficulties communicating, but they can understand me without

any problem. So, I was pleasantly surprised,” (Becky interview 1).

As she has noticed the examination-oriented nature of Hong Kong’s education system, she believed that encouragement would be one of their needs as well: ‘their need would be to be encouraged. I know that a lot of emphasis or cultural values are placed on examinations. So I thought they would just need someone to say, “It doesn’t matter if you make mistakes, just do it,” (Becky, Interview 1).

Current Teaching Experience

In Becky’s first year, she was responsible for the Speech Festival, the English Corner, the English Society and other English related activities. As for her teaching load, she had to teach 39 periods in a seven-day cycle. These periods included one full English class; all the others were oral English classes.

In her second year, her workload has increased a lot. She now teaches 43 periods in a seven-day cycle. In the previous year, she had to teach Forms 1, 2, 6 and 7 but this year, she has to teach Forms 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.

The number of extra-curricular activities she is assigned to has increased, too. She is now the English Corner Coordinator, English Society Coordinator, Speech Festival Coordinator, Spoken English Coordinator, Form 5 Inter-school Oral Practice Coordinator, and English Department IT coordinator.

Becky does not know how and why she became the English Department IT coordinator. This creates a lot of stress: “I have a lot of troubles with [the webpage] because I don’t know the technical sides. I’ve deleted files that I shouldn’t have, so I have to do it a second time. So, that for me is the most stressful one, the English Department IT coordinator, I don’t know why I was made that. I don’t have any IT skills.”(Becky, Interview 2).

Becky has established several goals for this academic year. First of all, she he would like to improve the English Corner by introducing activities that are more fun to have more students in the English Corner. In order to attract more students and to turn the English corner into a more useful place, she has set up an award programme. Students can get bonus points in English for coming to the English Corner. Beside the extra-curricular activities, she would like to aim for more quality lessons in order to “keep her head above water” (Becky, Interview 2) as she was “stressed, busy adapting”.

At the moment, Becky’s comfort level is still not very high although she feels “reasonably comfortable” (Becky, Interview 3). She believed she “would never be full accepted into the staff” (Becky, Interview 3) because she “will always be different” (Becky, Interview 3). Another reason is that she felt being used: “I feel that I’m being a little bit used” (Becky, Interview 2).

Appendix C

Parallel Text – Crystal

Crystal

Crystal is a 50-year-old Australian who is a third-year NET. She arrived in Hong Kong in August, 2001. She is friendly, out-going, energetic but sometimes assertive. She likes talking to others and she describes herself as a “people-person” (Crystal, Interview 1).

Crystal has always been interested in the Chinese culture. She wanted to go to China and so Hong Kong is a stepping stone for this goal.

“Our goal is to go into the Mainland. I have some medical problems and I have two little grand-children at home. I thought going from Australia to China was too big a jump. We decided Hong Kong would be a good stepping place. You know Chinese culture and I would be able to see if I could live apart from my family. We managed. I actually see more of my children than I did when I was there.” (Crystal Interview 2)

When Crystal saw the advertisement of the EMB in an Australian newspaper, she responded to it. After being interviewed by the EMB and the principal, Crystal has been teaching in School C. School C is a Band 1 CMI school in the New Territories.

One of Crystal’s goals is to make as many changes as possible. She

believes that NETs are hired as the “agents of change” (Crystal Interview 1). Even though she cannot change the system, she can still “make tiny little changes no matter how small” (Crystal Interview 1). As mentioned before, Crystal would like to work in the Mainland. She would like to work in small villages instead of the major provinces because she believed that those places need good English teachers. Because she is aiming at the remote areas in China, as part of the preparation, she is learning Putongha from a private tutor.

Previous Teaching Experience

Crystal got married after high school graduation. She went back to campus to do a BA degree in 1985 when her fourth child was school-aged. After the completion of the Post-graduate Diploma in Education, she started teaching in a government co-ed school. Since 1989, she has taught there for 12 years.

There were only “a few” (Crystal Interview 1) Asian students in Crystal first school. She taught them English, English Literature, Geography, History and Legal Study. Most of her Chinese students were “reasonably good in English” and they were “very clever and smart” (Crystal Interview 1).

Expectations

As part of the preparation in Australia, she used to chat with the Hong Kong people from her church. She has also taken a TESOL course to prepare for her teaching in Hong Kong. She has spoken to the previous NET and also the principal before she started teaching. The previous NET, who was quite negative, had problems with discipline. However, the contact with that NET was limited.

Crystal was asked to bring examples of the variety of lessons and ideas along with her when she attended the interview with the EMB. So, she had great expectations; she thought, “Wow! This is going to be good,” (Crystal, interview 1). She found it very disappointing to “come-in all inspired and then [be] limited” (Crystal, interview 1).

Crystal has expected her students’ level of English to be better. She thought they would have primary school training to meet a certain fixed standard. Unfortunately, she was very disappointed with the seniors; “A lot of them are too frightened to speak to you. Their classes are boring because they won’t talk, they’re very shy” (Crystal, interview 1).

Crystal expected her students’ needs to be language needs and she did not think of anything else. “I’ve just thought they’ll need lots of help

with pronunciation practice,” (Crystal, interview 1).

Current Teaching Experience

When Crystal first came to School C, she was given three full classes.

In her opinion, “it was a heavy work-load” (Crystal Interview 1). Her teaching hours was the same as that of a local English teacher. In her second year, her workload was lightened. She had to teach both of the Form 6 classes for half of the time because she was responsible for the reading comprehension, writing and oral while a local teacher, who was also the panel head and the vice-principal, taught practical skills and listening. Both of them taught the grammar component these two classes. Apart from the sixth-forms, Crystal also has to teach one F.1 class for half of the time on a similar basis. In her third year, she is teaching one F.6, one F.7, half of one F.1 class and an enhancement class. Her workload is about two-thirds that of a local teacher.

In terms of extra-curricular activities, she was assigned to the English Room and the English Club. Since no students attend, Crystal found it very boring. She and her husband have volunteered to help with supplementary classes after school. These classes include oral practices for F.1 to F.7.

Crystal found that her actual teaching experience differed from her expectations. She believed that she was employed to make changes as the agent of change but in reality, she was unable to accomplish changes. "The schools do not want you to do that. The teachers don't want you to do that. Their favorite saying is, 'Take it easy. Don't change anything. Just do it'"(Crystal, Interview 2).

One of Crystal's goals for this academic year is to keep up with the marking. For some of the marking, she has to do it herself while her students do some of the others. As a result, her second goal is to be able to provide answer sheets for the worksheets so that they would not become something useless. These goals are difficult to achieve because "it's a lot of work" (Crystal, interview 2) and she has been using every moment at her desk to work.

At the moment, Crystal's comfort level is "pretty good" and "pretty high" (Crystal Interview 3). She believes that she has integrated "pretty well" and she has been included "pretty well", too. She felt like "part of the furniture" (Crystal Interview 3). The local teachers at School C have paid for a lot of things for them during the first year and they have been invited as guests to various activities. Her current comfort

level is 90% (Crystal, Interview 2).

Appendix D

Parallel Text – Donald

Donald

Donald is a 35-year-old American, who arrived Hong Kong in August, 2002.

He is a “fairly easy-going” (Donald, interview 1) who had been doubting himself since the first year he has started teaching as a NET in Hong Kong.

Since Donald believed in teacher training and development very much, he would like to be an effective teacher, which is also his career goal. During his first year, he has a feeling that he has not been effective.

The reason why Donald became an English teacher was because he enjoyed learning Spanish and Japanese. Donald has visited Hong Kong as a tourist for a short time before. He liked Hong Kong as a city. Apart from that, there are places that he would like to see. On top of the need of saving money, the above are the reasons for him taking the NET job.

Previous Working Experience

Donald has taught in various countries. His first teaching job was in Hungary for a summer. After he has completed his degree with his teaching credentials, he got a teaching job in “a pretty rough high school” for one year in the US. Then, he went back to school to earn his MA. After which, he got a job in Saudi Arabia where he has taught for one year. Instead of teaching in a regular school, he taught in a

private company. Based on the banding system of Hong Kong, the private company Donald in Saudi Arabia was “quite a low band” (Donald, interview 1). Then, he taught in a local community college in California, which has a pretty high level, “at least intermediate or higher level” (Donald, interview 1). Then, he enrolled in the JET program in Japan and taught for three years before coming to Hong Kong to work as a NET.

He would describe his teaching experience in the US as ESL instead of EFL because most of his students were foreign international students or immigrants. There was a variety of languages, it can be as many as twelve. As a result, the students were not homogeneously grouped. When he taught in the high school in Oakland, there were quite a lot of Cantonese speakers. The Chinese students in that school “were always good, they’re always pretty well behaved,” (Donald, interview 1). In Japan, the size of his classes was halved. There was no discipline problem. The students were homogeneously grouped, in other words, they could converse easily in their first language. The school he worked at in Japan was good but the students’ communicative ability was quite low in English.

Expectations

Donald found out from the website that there would be about 40 students within a class. Because his classes in Japan were split-up, he assumed that the classes in Hong Kong would split up, too. He did not ask the principal about it when he was being interviewed on the phone.

The principal told Donald that it was a Band 3 school. However, Donald did not know what “Band 3” implied. He expected much better discipline because of his experience with the Japanese students in Japan as well as his experience with the Chinese students in Oakland.

From the contract, he knew that he had to be responsible for after-school activities, but he did not expect to do so many. He has also expected his students’ level of English to be higher. When he visited Hong Kong, he was “really impressed that so many people could speak English so well,” (Donald, interview 1). He has also expected students would need help with more advanced composition and advanced grammar. In terms of his roles, he assumed himself to be more like a regular class teacher instead of teaching phonics like “cat” and “dog”.

On top of that, he has never expected to “break up fights in the class” (Donald, interview 1) or to have students behaving like “little triads” or

“connected to the triads” (Donald, interview 1).

In Japan, people work very long hours but they do not work very intensively according to Donald. Work is perceived as quite social and people go drinking or partying together after work. Donald felt very positive about the working environment in Japan because “there [was] a big effort to include [him], even if [he was] a foreigner,” (Donald, interview1). As a result, Donald was expecting similar environment at his workplace in Hong Kong. However, in Donald’s first school in Hong Kong, his colleagues did not socialize with each other. Worse was that “[his] department, they don’t really like each other. People keep to themselves or just to their little group,” (Donald, interview 1). The staff room atmosphere in his first school in Hong Kong was similar to what he has experienced in the US, “People generally do their work and then go home immediately,” (Donald, interview 1).

Current Working Experience

In Donald’s first year, he had to teach every class in the school once a week. In other words, he had to teach at least 5 to 6 classes per day. For extra-curricular activities, he had to do the English club, English corner, choral speaking, school newspapers as well as workshops for

the staff. Because he had to teach phonics but there is no phonics curriculum, most of his non-teaching time was spent on lesson planning.

As Donald has changed school after his first year, he has expected to see changes in his life as a NET. He tried not to have any expectations on the conscious level. In other words, he did not expect his students in the new school to behave like his American students or his Japanese students. Unfortunately, he was shocked by the noise level of the classrooms as well as the frequency and volume of talking. "It's just so loud" (Donald Interview 1). His "sub-conscious expectation" was to assume the new students would have better discipline (Donald, Interview 1).

In the new school, Donald felt more like a regular teacher, whereas before, he was just the "phonics guy" (Donald, interview 2). Although his teaching load is reduced to 24 periods per 6-day cycle, the amount of preparation and marking has increased a lot.

Donald regards his first year of teaching as a NET in Hong Kong "really a failure" (Donald, interview 2) and has set several goals for this academic year. First of all, he wants to survive. Secondly, he

would like all his students to pass in the exam and to get good scores.

Thirdly, he would like to improve his classroom management, which was a problem at School D1. Lastly, he would like to be successful and to earn the respect from his colleagues which, as Donald mentioned in the second interview, "I feel like I didn't have that last year."

At School D2, Donald's level of comfort has risen, "It's not high but it's not low anymore. It's kind of middle level but getting better,"

(Donald, Interview 2).

Appendix E

Paralle Text – Ellie

Ellie

Ellie is a 38-year-old Australian who arrived in Hong Kong in July, 2001. She is a fairly easy-going person who is also quite independent (Ellie, Interview 1). She is overly critical of herself but she is also open to experiencing different things in life. She values relationship a lot, “I think the most important thing in any situation in life is relationships, building good relationships,” (Ellie, Interview 2). She is someone who does not have long-term goals. However, her personal goals include being happy and to try and help people who are not as fortunate as herself.

In terms of her career goal, she would like to “embark on a bit of a writing career, nothing too formal” (Ellie, Interview 1). At the same time, she would like to be involved in teaching, more specifically, adult migrant teaching.

There are several reasons why Ellie came to work as a NET in Hong Kong. First of all, she chose to come to Hong Kong because she wanted to live and experience another culture. Secondly, she was feeling “a little stale teaching in Australia” (Ellie, Interview 1). Lastly, she also wanted the opportunity to live in a very different part of the world and to expose herself to many different aspects of life.

At present, Ellie is teaching in School E, a Band 2 CMI school in the New Territories. She is now a third-year NET.

Previous Working Experience

After graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree in 1991, Ellie worked in a small legal firm to learn all aspects of the legal profession. Then, she worked in the business field before returning to the teaching profession in 1993. Her first school was an Armenian community school. Her students in this school spent three to four hours learning Armenian per day but they only had two hours of English instruction a day. So, it is an EFL context.

She has taught in a boys' Catholic school and also a girls' Catholic school before coming to Hong Kong as a NET. In the girls' catholic schools, there were 25 different nationalities within the school and 85% of the school population was from Asia. According to Ellie, she was virtually always teaching English to second language users.

On top of the EFL and ESL teaching experience, a large part of her teaching experience in Australia was to teach literature to native speakers.

The level of involvement and the English language proficiency of her

students varied greatly. Some of her students were very competent language users, “their level of proficiency was much better than native speakers,” (Ellie, interview 1). On the other hand, some of her students were refugees who might have never received any education. These students had no proficiency at all. But generally speaking, most of her students were average English users.

Expectations

Ellie had tried to speak to the previous NET of School E as much as she could. She has also spoken several times with the Principal and the panel head. She has also searched for information and articles about teaching in Hong Kong. Apart from that, she has also contacted people that she knew who had spent some time in Hong Kong. These people might not necessarily have taught in Hong Kong.

Before she arrived in Hong Kong, Ellie was expecting to have a very different experience to what she encountered in Australia. She had heard that teaching grammar was emphasized here and she would not be able to teach literature as exquisitely as she did. In other words, she thought that “I probably would not be able to be as creative as I had been” (Ellie, interview 1). She did not have too many expectations

towards her job as a NET because she regarded it as “an adventure” (Ellie, interview 1) to reinvent herself as a teacher.

Ellie was expecting the relationship with her colleagues to be similar with that in Australia which means that there are “some people you click with” but “other people you just have cordial, professional relationship with” (Ellie, interview 1).

Ellie thought her students’ level of English would be reasonably good in terms of grammar and their writing would probably be reasonably proficient. She also thought they would be ready to speak and use English.

Before she came to Hong Kong, she was expecting her students’ needs was “to be challenged to think outside the circle, or outside the square” (Ellie, interview 1). In terms of the language use, she thought they would need a lot of practice in listening and understanding the native speaking accent. She also thought they would need to be encouraged to use language more naturally, and to appreciate the language.

Current Teaching Experience

In Ellie’s first year, she had four Form1 classes and she was responsible for an activity called “A Word A Day”. She was

responsible for the speech festival for both choral speaking and some of the solo speaking entrants.

In the second year, she had the same teaching load, but she started to teach some of the senior students in Form 5 oral classes. She became responsible for the operation of English Corner for six to seven times a year.

This year, which is Ellie's third year to teach as a NET, she has similar workload with her first two years. She has to teach three Form 1 classes and to help some F.5 students with their oral English. As for extra-curricular activities, she will take a more active role.

In both her first and second year of teaching, she has to teach about thirty-five hours per six-day cycle. This amount of work was comparable to a LET. She enjoyed teaching the Form students because she believed that was the school population that the NET should be having most exposure to.

Her main goal, this year, lies align with what the Principal of School E said: "Less teaching and more learning" (Ellie, interview 3). It implies that she will step back as a teacher, give her students more time to respond, avoid spoon-feeding them, avoid giving them as many

worksheet or resources and instead, work with their existing knowledge and their talents. "So, I'm trying to step back, give them less, and allow them to give me more." (Ellie, interview 3).

At the moment, she is quite confident in what she is doing as a result of feeling fairly relaxed and comfortable and reasonably in control of what she is doing.

Appendix F

Parallel Text – Freda

Freda

Freda is a 37-year-old Canadian who arrived with her family in Hong Kong in August, 2002. She is a positive and easy-going person. Her friends think that she is a happy, cheerful, friendly and flexible person.

The reason why Freda came to Hong Kong to work as a NET was because she wanted her husband to be able to stay at home with the baby. In Canada, they have a one-year period of maternity leave. Freda was able to stay at home and to look after the baby. Afterward, her husband wanted to, but it was too difficult to live economically on one salary. Therefore, Freda and her family came to Hong Kong so that she could be a teacher and earn enough money so that her husband could stay at home.

Freda is now teaching in School F, a band 3 CMI school in the New Territories.

Previous Teaching Experience

Freda graduated with Bachelor of Arts in English in 1989. She then worked as a circulation manager in a newspaper for two years. Afterward, she went back to do a Teaching Certificate Program fulltime on campus. In 1993, she worked as an ESL, FSL (French as Second Language) teacher in Canada for two years. In July 1995, she

went to Japan to work for the JET program. Meanwhile, she completed a TESL Post-grad. Diploma through distance learning. In 1998, she went back to Canada to teach for one year. From 1999, she worked as a manager of training to help staff development for two years before coming to work as a NET.

To conclude, she taught for three years in Japan, and two years in Canada. She has also worked as a cooperate trainer for two years and spent four years working in the hospitality industry.

When she was in Canada, she taught English, French, Spanish and ESL. At that time, around 80% of her ESL students were Hong Kong Chinese. These students were homogeneously grouped according to the level of English. There were four levels: ESL 1, 2, 3, 4. ESL 1 was for students who were very new to Canada and had a very low level of English. When students reached ESL 4, they would be able to communicate and take lessons with Canadian children. Freda taught the ESL 3. Her students had a fairly high level of English but they were not ready to go into the mainstream English program yet: "They were really motivated, even though they didn't really like studying, or they didn't really like English" (Freda, interview 1). Her students could not

integrate into the mainstream until they have completed ESL 4 as a result, their motivation was very high.

When Freda took part in the JET program, she taught in a junior secondary school. It was the students' first time to learn English. They did not study it in primary school. Therefore, Freda taught them the alphabet and numbers.

Expectations

Freda and her family came with the expectation that they would be staying for one year only, there was no penalty in the contract for only doing it for one year even though it was a two-year contract. "We came with the expectation of seeing what happens," (Freda, interview 1).

Before Freda started teaching at School F, she had contact with the panel head. She has asked for the email address of the previous NET because she would like to speak to her. However, Freda's panel head had never answered the question. From her experience in Japan, "[she] know[s] that if they don't give you an answer, it means they don't want you to talk to that person," (Freda, interview 1).

Freda expected the NET scheme in Hong Kong to be very similar to the JET program in Japan. Therefore, she had not expected to do solo

teaching. She was expecting to teach oral classes instead of “teaching classes with strong focus in grammar” (Freda, interview 1). She knew that the class size would be big like in Japan because one of her good friends has been a NET for two years before she arrived in Hong Kong. The major difference between the JET program and the NET scheme, according to Freda, “the JET program was more like playing, [the NET scheme] is much more formal” (Freda, interview 1).

In terms of the classroom, she “expected pretty much the same as Japan” (Freda, interview 1). She was not surprised that the teacher changes classroom instead of the students. The arrangement of furniture of the classroom did not surprise her either. However, she was very surprised at the level of noise and the use of microphone; she “has never ever seen that in any country at any time” (Freda, interview 1).

Freda did not really have any expectations about the relationship with her colleagues before she came to Hong Kong. She hoped that she would have a good relationship like it was in Japan and Canada.

Freda expected the level of English of her Hong Kong students’ to be similar to her students in Japan. In other words, she expected her students to be “beginner” (Freda, interview 1). Freda was positively

surprised at her current students' level of English, "their level was quite a lot higher than I thought, especially for Form 6 and 7" (Freda, interview 1).

As for her students' needs, Freda did not have any expectation because she believed that "you really have to assess it when you meet your students" (Freda, interview 1). She found the environment of the Hong Kong classroom to be very different. She found it very strange that her students did not even know about university.

Current Teaching Experience

In Freda's first year, she had to teach 29 periods per cycle. For extra-curricular activities, she was responsible for the English corner three times per cycle. She was also responsible for English speaking days on Day 1, 3, 5 of the six-day cycle, Form 5 oral practice for four days per cycle after school. She was also responsible for speech festival and any special events such as Sports Day. In the second year, Freda was given the teaching load and schedule that she has asked for. She is doing co-teaching in all her classes now.

The goal she has set for this academic year is that "none of [her] students [would] hate English by the end of the year" (Freda, interview

2). She believed that this goal is the most realistic. And, she thought that if she can help them all to get to the end of the year and like English, she would regard herself as being successful.

In order to achieve this goal, Freda is having lots of fun, playing lots of games in order to make her students feel successful, reduce their stress and to turn the class into an award-based one instead of a punishment-based one.

One of Freda's future goals is to have better communication with the parents. Because of the language barrier, most of the communication is carried out through Freda's colleagues.

Freda is happy with where she is at the moment. She likes her teaching now but she would like to move forward and learn more about how she can make things better for her students, herself and her colleagues.

Appendix G

Interview Guide (First Interview)

Interview questions

Session 1

A) Warming up

1. Tell me about yourself. How would you describe yourself? How would your friends describe you?
2. Do you speak any other languages? How long have you been learning that/those language(s)? If cannot speak Chinese, are you going to learn it? Why/ Why not?
3. Why did you decide to take up the NET job?
4. What are some of your personal goals? Career goals? And have you achieved them?
5. How would you describe the way that you interact and work with people? How does it influence your interaction with your students?
6. Do you prefer spending time alone or with others? Please explain your preference(s).
7. Do you prefer working alone or with others (i.e., grading, preparing lessons, discussing school matters)? Please explain your preference(s).
8. Do you think you adapt easily to change? Please elaborate.
9. Please identify two personal characteristics that you would like to improve, and describe any efforts you have made to improve in these areas.

B) Previous working experience

1. Identify and describe jobs you have taken before coming to Hong Kong.
2. Have you had any experience in teaching in Southeast Asian countries before? If so, elaborate. How does this experience help your teaching in Hong Kong now?
3. Have you taught English as a second/ foreign language before? If so, please elaborate (i.e., ethnicities, L1, homogeneous grouping, years of English language study, etc.).
4. Have you ever taught Chinese students before? In what context (i.e., ages, proficiency, level of involvement, type of school, language policy, demographics of school population, etc.)?
5. What academic levels or “band” schools have you taught in before coming to Hong Kong? Have you taught in low banding schools before? Please describe your duties and experience.

Session 2

C) Pre-conceptions of Teaching in Hong Kong

1. Before coming to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your job as a NET to be like in the following aspects:
 - (i.e., teaching [styles, class size, role etc.],
 - classroom
 - preparation of examination materials
 - administrative, and
 - after-school responsibilities)?
2. How do your expectations compare and contrast to your current situation? Try to be as specific as possible.
3. What did you expect your students' level of English to be before you started your NET job?
4. How does that expectation compare and contrast to your current students? Try to be as specific as possible.
5. Before coming to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your relationship with colleagues to be?
6. How does that expectation compare and contrast to your current situation? Try to be as specific as possible.
7. How did you prepare yourself to teach in Hong Kong? Have you learnt anything about Hong Kong schools or the classroom situation before you came? If no, why not? If yes, from where? Did the information you obtained have any influence on your preconception of teaching in Hong Kong? If yes, in what way and why? If no, why not?
8. How do Hong Kong schools differ from those you have experienced in other parts of the world?
 - physical appearance/ size of school
 - school policy/culture
 - relationship with colleagues
 - staff room atmosphere
 - the furniture arrangement in staff room/ classroom
 - classroom atmosphere
9. How did you address the Principal/ deputy-head/ panel-head at the school you have taught previously? How about now? If addressed by position, how do you feel?
10. Before you came to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your students' needs to be? How about now? Do you know your students' needs? How do you learn to know their needs?

11. For all the differences you have mentioned, was it difficult to adjust to the changes? What strategies have you used? Do they work for you?
12. Did you participate in the Induction Programme organized by NESTA? If no, why not? If yes, how did you benefit from it?
13. Are you the first NET in your school? If not, did you have any contact with the previous NET(s) before you came to Hong Kong? If not, why not? If yes, how and why?
14. Did you have any contact with the school you are teaching in right now before you arrived in Hong Kong? If not, why not? If yes, how was the communication initiated?

Session 3

D) Current teaching experiences

1. What is the banding of the school you are teaching in right now? Do you think this is an appropriate banding level? Why/ Why not?
2. Please describe the learning culture at your school. Is it the same as you had been expecting? Why/ Why not? Is it the same as what you have experienced previously? If not, what are the differences?
3. What is the medium of instruction? If EMI, do students talk in English outside the classroom? If so, please describe. If not, why do you think they don't?
4. What is the medium of the staff meetings/ notices? How do you feel about it?
5. What duties are you assigned to do (i.e., teaching/ extra-curricular activities)? Have there been any changes since your first year of teaching?
6. How many classes and number of hours do you have to teach? Any supplementary classes?
7. Identify and describe the challenges have you encountered in the first two years of teaching here?
8. What do you think were the possible causes/reasons for those challenges?
9. How did you react to those challenges? Are you satisfied with the way you reacted? If not, what changes would you have made concerning your reactions?
10. How about now? Do you still face the same challenges? Different challenges? Are you trying new or different solutions? If so, please describe. If not, why?
11. How would you describe a typical class of yours?
12. How would you describe your students?
13. What are the major sources of pressure in teaching now?
14. What are the major sources of support you are receiving now? How?
15. How is your previous teaching experience the same and different from what you are experiencing now in Hong Kong?

16. How did you adapt to the changes? Did you have to make any adjustments to your teaching style? If yes, in what ways? How do you feel towards the change? Are you expecting any change in your teaching style in the future? If yes, why and how? If no, why not?
17. Describe the most positive experiences you have had as a NET in the classroom. How about your worst experiences ? Why?

Appendix H

Interview Guide (Interview with EMB Officer)

1. What is your opinion about the NET scheme?
2. In your opinion, how successful is the NET scheme?
3. When the NET scheme was first introduced, was the JET program in Japan consulted? Why/ Why not? How?
4. What is the current remuneration of NETs?
5. What are the teaching loads suggested by the EMB for NETs? How does it differ from the suggested teaching loads for local English teachers (LETs)? Why?
6. What should be the role played by NETs? What are the differences between the roles played by NETs and LETs? Why?
7. How do you think Hong Kong students are benefiting from the NET scheme?
8. How do you think the local staff are benefiting from the NET scheme?
9. In terms of how the NETs should be used, has the EMB issued some explicit guidelines for the principal to follow?
10. Is there any mechanism to prevent the NETs from being misused?
11. Has there been any cases in which NETs file complaint to EMB about how they were treated at school? Can you briefly describe what the complaints were about? What were the solutions?
12. What do you think are the challenges encountered by NETs in adapting to life at Hong Kong secondary schools? Why?
13. What recommendation would you give the NETs to overcome these challenges?
14. I have noticed in the recruitment advertisement that one of the requirements is "NETs should be native-speakers of English or possess native-speaker English competence". How do you define native speakers?
15. What support does the EMB provide after the NETs have started teaching?
16. How does EMB prepare the NETs to work in Hong Kong?
17. What is the EMB's view towards NESTA? What roles should this organization play?
18. How would you describe the current relationship between EMB and NESTA?
19. Does EMB encourage NETs to join NESTA? Why/ Why not?
20. Has there been any evaluation on the orientation provided? Can you briefly describe the results?

Appendix I

Transcript of the First Interview with Alfred

Interview#: 1
Topic area: Previous and Current Working Experience
Informant: Alfred
Date: 20 June, 2003.
Length: 50 minutes

I = Interviewer

S = Subject

I: First of all could you tell me about yourself please.

S: What would you like to know?

I: Anything you would like to tell me.

S: Okay, right. Well, I'm from Australia. I've been teaching for many years, I can't even work out how many years now. I'm 54, and I started teaching here, in Hong Kong, in August 2002.

I: How would you describe yourself?

S: That's difficult to say... I think I'm self-motivated and I like to try new things and try new challenges as well.

I: How would your friends describe you?

S: The same way I hope. I think most... I think they think I'm friendly.

I: Do you speak any other languages?

S: Yes, I speak German and French, as well as English.

I: How long have you been learning them?

S: I'm not learning them anymore, I speak German fluently and I learnt French for about 4 years. And I've been trying to learn Cantonese, but it's very, very difficult.

I: Are you taking any lessons?

S: No, I'm trying to teach myself from books.

I: Why did you decide to learn Cantonese?

S: Because I wanted to speak to people here in Hong Kong, people who couldn't speak English. I also think it's a polite thing to do to try to learn at least some of the language of the country where you live. I lived in Germany for 10 years.

I: Why did you decide to take up the NET job?

S: I've always been interested in teaching in an Asian country, which I haven't taught in before, and also the salary was very attractive here in Hong Kong too.

I: What are some of your personal goals?

S: To pay off some debts in Australia, and also to travel, especially around Asia.

I: I see. And how about career goals?

S: Career goals, well I'm coming towards the end of my career, so I would like perhaps to be an advisor in Hong Kong, or even to move to Beijing or Shanghai and work there as well.

I: Why have you thought of going to China?

S: China has always fascinated me, I'm very interested in China, that's why I want to go there.

I: How would you describe the way you interact and work with people?

S: I think I work with people quite well. I like to work in a team, I don't like working by myself, so... quite well I think.

I: How does it influence your interaction with your students?

S: I think it works in the same way that I like to work together with my students, not being a boss and telling them what to do all the time.

I: Do you prefer spending time alone or with others?

S: I prefer to be with others.

I: Could you explain your preference please?

S: How do you mean?

I: Could you explain why you prefer...

S: Oh, why I prefer to be with others. I think I'm a social person and I like talking to people, I like other peoples' company, listening to what they have to say and laughing together.

I: When you do grading, preparing lessons, discussing school matters, do you do them by yourself or with others?

S: A mixture. I prefer to do it together with other people, but sometimes we have to work alone.

I: Why is that?

S: Because people are doing different things at different times.

I: Do you think you adapt easily to change?

S: I think so, yes. Yes I do.

I: Why?

S: Because I think change is a good thing. I think that it shouldn't stay the same all the time, because people can always be made a little bit better, so things should change, it's a part of life.

I: Could you identify two personal characteristics that you would like to improve?

S: Let me think.... Being able to express my feelings better, and I think women can do that better than men can. To do more... I like to do more exercise, but sometimes I'm very lazy so maybe I would like to be not so lazy.

I: Are you doing anything to improve them?

S: Yes I am...

I: What are you doing?

S: I'm forcing myself to exercise, and I talk with my wife a lot especially on the phone and that helps me to express my feelings better.

I: Do these two characteristics affect your teaching? Or, do they have any influence?

S: No, I don't think so, no.

I: Could you tell me what jobs you have taken before you came to Hong Kong?

S: Most of my jobs have been teaching jobs. In Australia I taught German and French, Mathematics and I have also taught in Germany. I taught English in Germany and before I came to Hong Kong I was the principal of a coaching school, after schools coaching school, where students come for extra lessons.

I: Is coaching school the same as tutorial school?

S: Yes, the same as tutorial school, that's right.

I: When you were in Germany, did you have to teach English as a second or foreign language?

S: Yes, I did yes.

I: Could you elaborate on your experience, like ethnicities, L1, whether it's homogeneous grouping....

S: Yes, it was a homogeneous group, they were all German, their first language was German, and I taught there for almost 10 years... 9 or 10.

I: How long have your students been learning English?

S: Most of them learnt English from Primary 5, they start learning English, and go up to Secondary 2nd.

I: When you were in Germany or in Australia, have you ever taught

any Chinese students?

S: Yes I have, in Australia I taught Chinese too, and Chinese, Japanese and Korean students.

I: In what context was that? Like are you doing just proficiency?

S: No, it was university entrance. They were wanting to have their English raised so that they could study in Australia.

I: And so, what was their level of involvement was like?

S: Their level of involvement, they took... I'm not quite sure what you mean by level of ...how they were involved...

I: Their participation in class.

S: In the class, oh, the same, very phonetically, they did lots of spoken and listening exercises with me, yes, they... in the lessons very much so.

I: How does their participation compare to the Australian students?

S: I would say the same as Australian students.

I: What type of school was that?

S: It was a private English Language college.

I: What was the language policy?

S: I don't know what you mean 'what was the language policy'.

I: Are students supposed to speak English?

S: Yes they are supposed to speak English, yes they are. In fact we used to have a system where if the student spoke their first language and not English, they had to put a dollar in the box, and at the end of term we had a party. We used the money to have a party.

I: And so do other students have to catch each other?

S: Yes, they tell each other to. And especially when a Chinese student could hear two Koreans speaking Korean, or a Thai student heard two Chinese students speaking then... [makes a cutting sound]

I: Could you tell me the demographics of school population?

S: Mostly Chinese, Korean, and... Taiwanese, mostly. There were a few, I think one or two Japanese, one or two Thai people, mostly Chinese, Japanese [Korean?] and Taiwanese.

I: Are all the schools you have taught before, were they ranked in bandings or levels like the way in Hong Kong schools?

S: No, no, in Australia they're not banded. In Germany they are banded, yes, and I taught in a top band school.

I: Have you ever taught in a low band school before?

S: Not before, no, no. I'm teaching here for the first time in a low band school.

I: Could you describe your duties and experience in the schools you have taught in?

S: Well, the normal teaching duties, teaching, and I was also a panel chair in the department as well. I was also in another part of the education department I also produced learning materials for students who did not go to school because they lived too far from school, they lived in the countryside.

I: Was that in Australia?

S: In Australia, yes, that was in Australia. So that's another reason why I'd like to go to China because I think there is a big need for that, I think there are probably many students in China who live too far away from school, who need some help.

I: Before you came to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your job as a NET to be like in terms of the teaching styles, class size, your role?

S: I think I knew what it was going to like because I had friends here who had told me about teaching in Hong Kong, I knew that the classes would be quite a bit larger than in Australia, I knew the kind of books that would be used here, and that the teaching style is a little bit conservative compared to Australia, so I knew that already.. my expectations were...

I: How about your role as a teacher?

S: I think the same as well, I knew what was expected of me.

I: How about the classroom? What were you expecting to see?

S: I was expecting to see many desks. I think the classrooms here are better equipped than I thought they would be, I thought they would be more basic, but we have got a good school here. The thing that surprised me was using a microphone to speak to students, I've never used a microphone before. Otherwise the classrooms are similar to Australia.

I: Even the arrangement of furniture?

S: We usually don't have rows in classrooms anymore but we usually put our students round in a 'U' shape so that more discussion can take place, but I think here in Hong Kong, there are so many students in the classes that it is a bit more difficult to do that.

I: Were you expected to prepare any examination materials?

S: Yes, yes.

I: How about administrative duties? Were you expecting to do

any?

S: I thought I would have to. I don't have to do many, really, because we're a CMI school so most of the administration is in Chinese and I don't think I could do it.

I: What did you think you had to do?

S: I thought I might have to be a class teacher, I don't have to do it.

I: How about the after-school responsibilities?

S: Well, we don't normally do that in Australia, and I have to do two different after-school activities with students, one of them is the English Society and another one... they are to do with English, so that's okay.

I: Were you expecting to do them?

S: Yes, I'd been told that I would have to do that.

I: How do your expectations compare and contrast to your current situation?

S: I think I knew quite well, I expected the school to be like this because I had spoken to the principal and spoken to my friends who already worked in Hong Kong, so I... there were no surprises for me.

I: What did you expect your students' level of English to be like?

S: I expected it to be much better than it is, I was surprised that the level of English was so low. In fact the books which I brought with me from Australia, I haven't been able to use because the level of English is too high for my students.

I: Before coming to Hong Kong what were you expecting your relationship with colleagues to be like?

S: I thought colleagues might not be so friendly, they are more friendly than I had expected, so I'm very lucky.

I: And how did you prepare yourself to teach in Hong Kong?

S: Well, I collected materials as much as possible, to bring with me – teaching materials, and I read books about Hong Kong and also spoke to my... to people who were already working here in Hong Kong.

I: I see. And, could you tell me what sort of books you read about Hong Kong. Are they for tourists?

S: More for tourists, yes, books for tourists about Hong Kong.

I: Have you learnt anything about Hong Kong schools or the classroom situation?

S: Oh yes, I've learnt...since being here in Hong Kong.

I: I mean before.

S: Before...no, not really no.

I: Did you want to know more about Hong Kong schools and classrooms?

S: I would have liked to have known more, yes.

I: Why?

S: Because I think it would prepare me better for working here in Hong Kong. We had a course to introduce us to teaching in Hong Kong when I first came to Hong Kong – the induction program, but maybe a small induction program back in Australia would have helped too, a little.

I: Do you think it would be difficult to find books or information about Hong Kong schools or the classroom situation?

S: In Australia, yes it is, it is more difficult.

I: Did the information you obtained either from your friends or from the principal have any influence on your preconceptions of teaching in Hong Kong?

S: Oh yes it did. That's how I got my ideas about teaching in Hong Kong.

I: In what ways?

S: In some ways... I was prepared for the large classes, but some people that I have met who teach in Hong Kong were very negative about the staff that they work with and they said that their colleagues were not very friendly, that's why I was surprised that mine were so friendly when I got here. But I think also it depends on the NETs as well, and I think if I come new into a school that I have to try to be friendly and make a point of talking to people, I can't sit at my desk and expect people to come to me. And I think maybe some NETs expect people to make friends with them, but they don't do anything.

I: How do Hong Kong schools differ from those you have experienced in other parts of the world, for example in terms of the physical appearance or the size of the school.

S: I was surprised that Hong Kong schools aren't very much different from other schools. They are perhaps bigger. In Australia we try to keep schools at round about 800 to 900, this school next year will be 1,200, I think. And I know of NETs working in schools where there are 2,000 students. So there are some really big schools in Hong Kong. The facilities in this school are good. I think in my experience they are not very different from Australia or Germany.

I: And how about the physical appearance?

S: The same with the physical appearance – it's similar. The only thing that surprised me was that in a new school there were still blackboards with chalk whereas in Australia and Germany we use whiteboards, and with felt pens.

I: We also use blackboards and chalk in Chinese U., in some of the classrooms. And were you surprised to see all the concrete everywhere here?

S: No, I had seen photographs of schools and of Hong Kong, and I knew that there was a lot of concrete.

I: How about the school policy or the culture, any difference?

S: Yes, in this school the administration is quite strict, and I think in Australia there was more... The attitude to the teachers was freer in that in this school we're not allowed to go out for lunch, we're not allowed to leave the school between 8:30am and 4:30pm without permission, and that doesn't happen in Australia. And I think there is more discussion about decisions in Australia but here usually the decisions are made by the principal and the teachers are told what the decision is, whereas in Australia there is more discussion about decisions, I think.

I: How about relationship with colleagues?

S: I think that's about the same, it's friendly too, just like here.

I: Do you socialise with your colleagues, during weekends or after school?

S: With some colleagues, yes, we go out for dinner or... Some colleagues took me to the flower market at the New Year, for example.

I: How about the staffroom atmosphere?

S: It's a good atmosphere, very friendly, very happy, people laugh – it's good.

I: How about the furniture arrangement in the staffroom?

S: We are very lucky, we have our own workstations, it's great.

I: How about in Australia and Germany?

S: It depends on the school. This is probably one of the best equipped schools that I've worked in. Usually the desks are smaller and not quite so nice – in Australia. In Germany they're a little better.

I: Do you have any sofa or socialising area in the staffroom?

S: Not in the staffroom but there's a room on the next floor where there's a sofa and we can socialise in that.

I: In this school?

S: Yes, in this school, on the next floor.

I: And how about in Australia and Germany?

S: No, not usually, no, just the staffroom.

I: And how about the furniture arrangement in the classroom, any difference too?

S: Just as I mentioned before, that in Hong Kong it's done in rows and in Australia we tend to have it in a circle where the students can discuss. But I think that the reason... That's because Hong Kong classes are larger and also there's not a culture of discussion with students, the students expect to be told things, and I think that's the difference. Sometimes when I try to talk to my students to involve them in a discussion they think it's not work and they're not used to it.

I: How about the classroom atmosphere, any difference too?

S: No, it's about the same as Australia. That... I had expected students to be more.... To not be so naughty, to be more polite, but I suppose because I'm in a band three school, we get naughty students here. The Hong Kong students that I taught in Australia are usually very well behaved and very quiet, and so it's different here.

I: And how did you address the principal, deputy head, or panel head of the school you taught in Australia or Germany?

S: In Australia we... you mean, what name we call them, is that what you mean?

I: No, I mean do you address them on a personal basis or last name basis?

S: Usually first name basis in Australia. In Germany, last name basis because that's German culture, and mostly you address your colleagues by last name basis, in Germany, that's simply the culture of Germany, and in Australia we use first names because that's the culture there.

I: Did you have to address the principal as 'principal' and the last name?

S: Here in Hong Kong or in Australia? No, no, in Germany? No, you would just call them 'Mr. so and so' or 'Miss. so and so'.

I: And how about here?

S: Here, I call the principal Miss. Lee, so yes, I don't say 'principal' even, just Miss. Lee.

I: Some of the NETs I have interviewed, they have to call the principal as 'Principal Hui' and 'Panel Lee'.

S: Oh really? No, no, I don't have to do that. And all my English colleagues I usually call them by their first name, by their English name, and many other colleagues too, not just the English.

I: Before you came to Hong Kong, what were you expecting the students' needs to be?

S: I thought they would want to speak English more, and better, but they seem to want to write more than speak, they're more interested in writing. They seem to think that speaking is not really an important part of learning English.

I: Do you think you know your students' needs now?

S: Yes, I do, yes.

I: How do you learn to know their needs?

S: By talking to them and they tell me too, they're quite forthcoming in what they have to say.

I: For all the differences you have mentioned, was it difficult to adjust to all these changes?

S: No, I don't think it was difficult. I had to adjust. No, I don't think so.

I: What strategies have you used to adjust yourself?

S: I've tried to think about what I teach and the way I teach it, when things don't work, what my students need. I've had to make some changes like having colleagues help me to write the Chinese translation of new vocabulary for students who find it very difficult to explain, to understand English explanations. That had to do with my idea of how good the students were, they were a lower standard than I thought so I've had to adjust my expectations.

I: And do they work for you?

S: Yes, they do, yes they do. I'm lucky because I have the 'A' class this year.

I: They're supposed to be the best?

S: They're the best ones.

I: So, you have mentioned about the induction programme organised by NESTA. How did you benefit from it?

S: I think it was a good programme, they've got lots of useful information: being able to talk to people from the EMB, getting information from NETs who have been in Hong Kong for several years, even useful things like how to open a bank account and how to find a flat, useful pieces of information, but also teaching and working in schools as well.

I: Are you the first NET in your school?

S: No, there was a NET here last year.

I: Did you have any contact with the previous NET?

S: I met him once, this year he came back to visit the school.

I: So, not before you came.

S: Not before I came.

I: Why not?

S: Because I didn't know him, and I contacted people, I spoke to my friends who work in different schools.

I: How was the communication with your principal initiated at the first place?

S: I rang her, because I had heard that the NET was leaving this school, so I rang the school, rang the principal and said that I had applied and I would like to teach here.

I: Was the communication initiated before you signed the contract?

S: Yes, yes it was.

I: Was it just one phone call?

S: No, several phone calls.

I: Did it help?

S: Yes it did, it helped a lot because I first of all had to convince Miss. Lee that I was a good NET.

I: Did you have to do a phone interview?

S: It was a phone interview, yes. I had an interview, a personal interview with somebody from the EMB, in Australia, and then I had a phone interview with Miss. Lee, the principal.

I: Do you think band three is appropriate for this school? Do you think this banding is appropriate?

S: I think so, yes I think so.

I: Why?

S: We have students who aren't terribly motivated, especially in the lower forms and looking at the exam papers of students in the lower forms, they must be at the bottom of the academic ladder.

I: Can you describe the learning culture of the school? Of this school.

S: It depends on the classes. My students in 'A' classes try to learn and ask lots of questions, but I know from colleagues who teach the lower classes that they have students that are not motivated at all.

I: Is it the same as you have been expecting?

S: I think so. It's similar to Australia.

I: And why is that?

S: Well, we have a mixture of students in every school because they're not banded, so you always have good students who try very hard and are interested in learning, and other students who don't want to be there, are only there because they have to be there.

I: Is it the same as what you have experienced previously?

S: Yes it is.

I: So, is this a CMI school?

S: This is a CMI school.

I: So students do not talk in English outside class.

S: That's our problem, yes.

I: Why do you think they don't talk in English outside the classroom?

S: I think it's because they...there is so much available in Cantonese, they watch Cantonese television, obviously Cantonese is their first language. Pop songs, music, is in Cantonese. They live here, in an area where there are not many 'Gwai-lo's'. For a lot of them, they have relatives at home who speak Putonghua as well, so that they know Putonghua and Cantonese, and English is just another language. So, I think that's... I've been working together with the panel-chair today on a proposal to try and get students to be able to use English more outside the classroom.

I: And what have you proposed?

S: We've got an English room, we'll have lots of films, lots of games, fun activities, an English café for senior students which takes place once a month, where they can come and chat; and I'm also trying to arrange a...a kind of connection between a school in Australia and this school, where we're using the computer web-cam we'll be able to have some students being able to talk to each other between schools.

I: What is the medium of staff meetings here?

S: Cantonese.

I: And how about the staff notices?

S: Cantonese.

I: How do you feel about it?

S: Ah, well, I'm in a Cantonese school, I'm in a Chinese school. I have colleagues who translate the important things for me, so it's okay.

I: Do you still have to attend meetings?

S: Yes, yes.

I: I see. How do you feel about meetings?

S: Sometimes I think it's a waste of time, that I'd be better working, preparing materials that all my colleagues could use as well. The principal feels that I have to do the same things that other teachers have to do here too.

I: What duties are you assigned to do, in terms of teaching and the ECA?

S: I have two full-time classes, a form 2 and a form 3 this year, and I also teach oral lessons for forms 4-7, and ECA....

I: Every class for form 4-7?

S: Yes, well, there's only one form 4, one form 5, two form 6s and one form 7. So I just teach two lessons per week for those five classes. And ECA, I do English Society and the speech festival for the choral speaking, one or two easy pieces.

I: Do you think there will be changes in the coming year?

S: Changes for the school or changes for me?

I: For your work-load.

S: For my work-load, next year, yes I think there will be, I think the school needs to save some money, so I think my work-load will be heavier next year because this year I worked with the oral, I worked together with the Chinese teacher in the classes so there were two teachers in every oral class, but I don't think we can afford to do that next year so I... I'll have one extra class, with extra marking and things, so I think my work-load will be heavier.

I: Is that co-teaching? What does the Chinese teacher do? Is she mainly responsible for discipline?

S: It just depends, with senior classes you don't have to worry so much about discipline – they're interested and they're lively. Usually the Chinese teacher helps with organising the lesson, we talk about what I'm going to do with the students before, so it fits into what is happening, and then if it's a discussion the Chinese teacher will come around, with me, and so if they are four groups discussing, then she will sit with one group, I will sit with another group and we'll move around, so....

I: How many classes or number of hours you have to teach in a 6-day cycle?

S: In a 6-day cycle I teach 31 lessons, which are 35 minutes long. So 31 times 35 minutes.

I: And, do you have to do any supplementary classes?

S: Yes, we usually, once every eight weeks have to do one after school class.

I: What is it?

S: It's where students can come to ask questions about English, to get help with their homework. We sit in a room and students can come to us. Often my students ask for an extra class after school, especially around exam time.

I: Are all the English teachers responsible for that particular supplementary class?

S: Yes, we take turns.

I: And can you identify and describe the challenges that you have encountered?

S: Try to motivate the weaker students in the class. Try to get them to talk to me in English. Weaker students often bring another student along and speak in Cantonese and let the other student translate. I try to get them to try to speak to me in English themselves. Discipline was a problem, was a challenge for me in the beginning because they didn't know what I expected and I didn't know what they expected, or what they should do, and I made some mistakes as well. I also didn't know what was expected of a teacher as far as administration things are concerned and I had to learn that quite fast.

I: What did you do to make that weaker student to speak in English to you?

S: Usually get them on their own and speak to them where they have to answer me, and be friendly as well, that's the most important thing, I think, is try to be friendly. And occasionally I'll be able to use a Cantonese word or phrase in class, and if I say it wrongly they laugh and I laugh and they can see, and I can say 'Look, I have problems with Cantonese, and I know you have problems with English, so I can help you with that and you can help me with my Cantonese.' And they like that, they think it's funny. Yes, that's how they start to talk to me.

I: How did you react to the other challenges that you mentioned?

S: By asking advice of colleagues and getting good advice from them.

I: Are you satisfied with the way they reacted?

S: I think so, yes. In general, yes.

I: How about now, do you face the same challenges?

S: No, not so much now. At first sometimes, I thought my students were being rude or impolite to me, but then I learnt that they weren't, that they just didn't know how to say things in English in the correct way, and so for example, they called me by my last name, and they'll say 'Hey Alfred!' and I know whereas in Australia people would find that quite rude. I know they don't mean to be rude and so I've learnt to take it better now, it's simply because they call their other teachers by their surname, and they're doing exactly the same in English.

I: And so you said you don't face the same challenges now?

S: Not so much now.

I: What are the ones you are facing now?

S: Mainly the workload, keeping up with all the marking, it's quite...very difficult.

I: Are you going to try any new or different solutions to all those challenges you have mentioned?

S: Yes, I'll try different things next year, different ways of teaching. I want to involve students much more, making them speak in class, getting in front of the class and speak so I won't be talking all the time. And, I'll simply sit down in the class with the rest and let them talk, speak in English so that's one of the major things I'll change.

I: How would you describe a typical class of yours?

S: That's a difficult question. I think it's interesting. I think the students have fun. They laugh. Some of them are very noisy because I think they're used to a more... a stricter discipline in the class, where they have to sit quietly and copy things from the board. I don't work that way so some students think that what I do with them is not work, so they can chat with their neighbour. So that's... I have to make sure they don't chat with their neighbour in Cantonese.

I: How would you describe your students?

S: I like my students. They are all good, friendly, students. Most of them try to work. Most of them are polite to me too.

I: What are the main sources of pressure in teaching now?

S: The work-load. Trying to get all the marks together and at the moment we have a lot of extra things to do, involved with the running of the school. In January we have to work three Saturdays in a row because we are trying to attract new students from Primary 6 to the school. I think with extra things that we're asked to do, they take a lot of time away.

I: Do you have a lot of extra duties assigned to you?

S: I don't have... No more than any other teacher. Probably, maybe less than many other Chinese teachers.

I: What do you usually have to do for extra duties?

S: Extra duties, well, teaching or looking after classes where the teacher is away, sick. Coming in on Saturday to run activities for Primary 6 classes. At the moment it's decorating the school, attending school functions, for example a ceremony or some...those kind of things we have to do.

I: Do you like them?

S: Some are okay, but some are not.

I: What are the major sources of support you are receiving now?

S: Oh from my colleagues, definitely from my colleagues.

I: How do they give support to you?

S: By talking, joking, by translating things in the staffroom so I understand what's going on. By inviting me to restaurants and so on, yes.

I: How is your previous teaching experience the same and different from what you are experiencing now in Hong Kong?

S: It's similar, similar to what I was teaching before. It depends on the job. In a school it's very similar. When I was working in the tutorial college, I was alone for a lot of the time, a lot of the day, until the teachers came in in the evenings, so that wasn't such a good experience because I like to work together with people.

I: How did you adapt to the changes?

S: I enjoyed the changes because I like working with people, and that's what I do here.

I: Did you have to make any adjustment to your teaching style?

S: Yes, I have to be more strict here, I could be more relaxed in Australia. But here because of the class sizes, I have to be more strict.

I: How about your teaching approach?

S: No, I try to keep that the same. The good thing about being a foreigner is that I'm already seen as different and I can behave differently, but they don't think that's strange. Whereas I think, if a Chinese teacher behaved the way I behave in class, students would think that was very strange and probably they would laugh at her.

I: Are you expecting any change in your teaching style in future?

S: Not a big change, no, I don't think so.

I: Why not?

S: What I'm doing seems to be working, there are a few minor adjustments that need to be done, but in general I think things seem to work.

I: What are the minor adjustments?

S: Giving students more homework. And also trying to have more different activities so that I have difficult activities for the brighter students in the class and easier activities for the not so bright students.

I: Are these different activities conducted at the same time?

S: I try to do them at the same time, yes.

I: Could you describe the most positive experience you have had as a NET so far, in the classroom.

S: In the classroom, it's... one girl who went up to go to the class had difficulty understanding me and often came out and said 'I don't understand, I don't understand,' and in tests and exams, she didn't do very well, and just failed and was very upset. And...I helped her after school a few times, and she comes to talk to me often. And now she's coming about fourth in the class, so I'm really pleased for her, very pleased.

I: And how about your most positive experience as a NET in a school in general?

S: I think being invited to go out with colleagues, that they think of me enough to say 'Come with us, we're going to... for dinner tonight, let's go together,' that's really nice.

I: And why were they the most positive experiences?

S: I think that it's being accepted into Hong Kong society.

I: And now, could you experience the most negative experience you've had inside a classroom?

S: The most negative... I think, not even terribly negative, I think, I had to take an extra lesson, a substitute lesson, ninth lesson on Friday afternoon, with all the boys from 1D and 1E and they were shouting and loud, and I had to really lose my temper and bump the desks just to get them to sit down and be quiet. That was the worst one.

I: Why is that?

S: I didn't like having to lose my temper and be a very angry teacher.

I: What is your worst experience as a NET in school in general?

S: That's a difficult one... I think maybe learning that I can't take my favourite class next year, I'll have different class next year. I wanted to keep my favourite class.

Appendix J

Transcript of First Interview with Crystal

Interview#: 1
Topic area: Previous and Current Working Experience
Informant: Crystal
Date: 12 June, 2003.
Length: 80 minutes

I = Interviewer

S= Subject

I: Could you tell me about yourself?

S: Alright. I am Australian, I am married with four children and they are all grown up. So, I decided to come to Hong Kong. [laugh] I have other reasons like I want to go into China after here. But, I decided to come and teach English so that I can experience Chinese culture which I like.

I: How did you learn about the Chinese culture in the first place?

S: Australian education system is very good. We learnt about all different parts of the world. So, unlike America, "Where is Australia?" [laugh] We could have learnt about African history, European history, Asian history and the East-West history. We do a lot of Chinese history. It's compulsory in our Grade 8, which is your Form 1 here. In Grade 8, students have to take history for six months and they do a unit on one of the you know. If they choose history, then in the junior form, they will do two more units on Chinese history. Then, in senior, if you do modern history and you can do The Box of Rebellion and [unintelligible].

I: How would you describe yourself?

S: Friendly, out-going, energetic, assertive sometimes [laugh], flexible [laugh], that's about it.

I: How would your friends describe you?

S: Probably they say I am too soft in terms of I have a soft heart and they said, "Hearten up! Learn to say no!" They say hard worker. Yes, pretty much.

I: Do you speak any other languages?

S: No. We are learning Putongha now.

I: How?

S: At home. We have a tutor. Because in Cantonese, I just learnt little phrases sometimes from my students, sometimes from my colleagues and some auxiliary staff. They love to teach me little phrases and if I learn a phrase, I race down and

tell them because I learnt. The first thing you know when you get here in August is very hot, *ho yi* and then, it got cold so it was like *ho dung*. And then, it was windy *dai fung*. And then, when it was raining the other day, I said to my colleagues, “I don’t even know the word for rain.” And they said, “*lok dai yu*.” So, I raced down to the auxiliary staff and go like this (a hands-up gesture). Then I said, “*lok dai yu*.” Then they clap.

I: How often do you have Putongha lesson?

S: An hour and a half once a week. But, we are not very good students. If my students were as bad as me, I would be very angry. Because when we say we would learn it and he comes on Wednesday night. And on Wednesday night before he comes, we quickly go over the text. We are not very good pupil but we really want to learn. If we are going to China, then we need Putongha. In Hong Kong, we can get by with English. But we want to go further in. We spent last summer in a village in *Cheung Sha*. They can’t understand you, you know. We figure if we want to live in China, we really do need to make effort. Some of the students are from the mainland and they move here a little bit anyway and the teachers. So I can practice and get some pronunciation from the Putongha teacher. And then, that makes them like one of the teachers who never spoke to me. One of the Putongha teachers who would never spoke to me. She just nodded. I think it’s because she was too frightened to speak English to me. She wouldn’t even say “Hello”. But, I went to her and ask her how she pronounced the words. And ever since then, she said “Hello!”.

I: Why did you take up the NET job?

S: Our goal is to go into the mainland. I have some medical problems and I have two little grand-children at home. I thought going from Australia to China was too big a jump. We decided Hong Kong would be a good stepping place. You know Chinese culture and I would be able to see if I could live again from my family. We managed. I actually see more some of my children than I did when I was there. Australia is such a big place. Sometimes, I didn’t get to see some of them for a couple of years. We have been home for about three times.

I: What are some of your personal goals?

S: I think they change constantly. To learn Putongha. I am Christian, so my personal goals sort of align with that. I guess just to be a better person and to be able to make those around me happy and to be better, too.

I: What are some of your career goals?

S: I will never go back and teach full-time in Australia.

I: Why?

S: Because it’s interesting, the difference. Here, they respect age and they don’t

think I am old. Like they said they wanted someone young. And I said, "I am not young." They said, "Yes, you are. You have lots of energy." They said the last NET was very old. You know very slow, old, dodderly. They respect me. At home, the education want the young ones. They don't want experience. Strange, mix-up crazy modern being. So, I may go home to do supply work, never work full-time. A goal here would be to make as many changes as I could. We are hired as the agent of change. The first thing that happened when you get into a school you were told, "Not to make any change and take it easy." My colleagues say, "Take it easy." Because you know the system needs changing. So, I just look if I can make tiny little changes no matter how small because I can't change the big pictures. You know like here, I am just happy if I can communicate. Next year, I have F.6 again and F.7. My goal is at least to see them improve. They are not very interested in learning English except two days before the exams, then they want to know everything now. But a career goal is simply to do my job here well and to get a job in mainland. Mainland Chinese are very eager to learn English. I have already been offered a job through my church. It's a little place with a million people called [unintelligible] in *Hunam* province. But, I have already promised Francis I would do another two-years contract. I think there would be many jobs. So, I turned them down. And the Lutheran school here is looking at building secondary schools. Maybe in two years time, I don't want to be Shanghai, Beijing, you know. I don't want to be in center, but somewhere you can make a difference.

I: Why don't you want to go to those big cities in China?

S: Because they are already Westernized. I mean I'd like to go to Shanghai. I have been to Shanghai. I did a little tour: Huangchou, Sochou and Shanghai, very quick, such a little quick tour. But Shanghai has western contact for long time. Beijing is learning English as quick as possible for the Olympic. And a lot of people who have been taught, and people wanting to make a lot of money will be drawn to those places. But other places need good English teachers, too. Even the paid is higher, but I am not going there.

I: How would you describe the way that you interact and work with people?

S: I interact fairly well even with strangers here. I always look at people and if they look at me, I respond with a smile. Most time people automatically say something back. Some people you look and they just won't look at you, but if you do, you know. I interact in the market. I go in and get my food. They are always very helpful. They chatted away in Cantonese. But you know, it's OK. My colleagues, I get along really well with. But there are problems. There are

always problems. But generally, I interact well with everyone.

I: How does it influence your interaction with your students?

S: Pretty good because within the first three days, I know every student in my class. The key, number one, is being able to communicate, being able to discipline and control. So, I make a point of learning their names. I just learnt their first names. I give them all an English name. If they don't have an English name, they get an English name. If they have a silly English name, I change it. "I refuse to call you this, it is not a name." And then, it's surprising. It takes me a lot longer to recognize them out of class. If I see them in the playground, it's like one face. But I recognize their face, I can say "Hello." But when I do my report, even my Chinese colleagues say, "How do you know who you are writing about?" Then I said because I know their name. Then, they go, "How?" Then, I write a comment for every student. "How do you know which is which?" "I know them." I interact well with them. If I have to be stunned, then I make sure I smile later on and or use them as example first. If you have to go mad, and then they sort of . And so you have to treat them the same. I think they have recognized, know their names so that you can speak to them. Some of the students, the young ones, my F.7 from last year initiated email me. I went out to lunch with them. They are not afraid of speaking to me. One NET, a high up NET, she said to me the other day, we were having coffee, "You know, I have been here for 4 or 5 years and I have an interview today." Not a parent interview, but parents being at school. "Students came up and spoke to me. They weren't afraid." She was so happy. I was sitting there thinking, "How long have you been in that school? And your kids start learning just now?" I thought, I wouldn't be able to cope because I am people-person. So, if I didn't talk to them, I'll be miserable here, you know.

I: Do you prefer spending time alone or with others?

S: I'd being with others. I need some quiet time. Everybody needs some quiet time. I like being with others. I'll tell you a little antidote. When I first came here, it was the first day before school starts. You have a meeting. I speak to my husband before I left, "I'll just see what happens. I could be home for lunch, I may not. I don't know what is happening." So, we had a big meeting. I hang back to my staff room, sitting at my desk in the corner. They all came in. The woman teachers were all "blablabla" [imitation of talking]. They got their purse and they walked towards the door. And I thought, "They are going for lunch. Well, I can sit here and watch them go and then feel miserable and go home and go winch, winch, winch. Or I could sort of you know." So I said, "Oh! Is it lunch time?" And they said, "Yes. Would you like to join us?" I grabbed my

purse. But the thing that made me feel better because basically I invited myself you know. When I was walking towards the door, one of the male teachers whose desk was next to me but he has an office upstairs. He came racing in and said, "Suzanne, would you like to come to lunch?" He was part of that group. I felt better because he has intended to invite me to lunch. I found out later, just by their remarks why they hadn't asked me. And if they don't say anything and you don't communicate, then you don't know. But they said, "You like Chinese food?" "Yes." Each Friday, I would go to lunch with them. "You like going to lunch with us?" "Yes." "The other teacher", she said, "she stayed up in the English room. She did all her work in the English room. She bought lunch box." "I am not going into the English room. It's a cold horrible room. Why would I like to sit up there on my own?" I said. I understood then where I was coming from. At the beginning, we were going about two or three times a week. Then, we started to put up too weight. The women decided we only go out on Friday mainly you know. I like people. I like interaction with people.

I: Do you think you adapt easily to change?

S: I think yes and no.

I: Why is that?

S: I think that, sometimes, there is always a part of you that resists change. This is the way I do it. This is the way I have always done it. It works well. Why do I need to change? And I think there is a part of that. And I am a person of habit so I like to you know. But change is a way of life. Change is interesting, challenging and necessary I guess. So, yes, I can adapt to change for good.

I: Could you tell me what jobs you have taken before coming to Hong

Kong?

S: Well basically I left school and started a family. I left high school, married and started my family. I was quite young. And so I didn't work as a young woman. And when my fourth child was school-age, I went back and did my senior. And then I got into university and I did my degree and then I did my teaching qualification. So, I became a teacher and that's basically all I have done in terms of career.

I: What school did you teach in?

S: It was a government school, a normal school, co-ed.

I: Are they native speakers?

S: Most. Every school has people from other countries because Australia is so multi-cultural. I don't think I have ever been in school where there aren't any

other people. My first school was on the Gold Coast in Queensland. We had Chinese and you get American and you will get some European. We were just started to get an area of ... it was like Muslims. I don't know whether they were Parkistani whether they were more Arabic. But maybe they were refugees. I didn't know what it was. But I know that we had to be careful because we did have problems with the male, the young male. "You are a woman, you are nothing. You are useless. I don't have to do anything you say to me." That attitude is in grain, so you have to gently say, "This is our classroom. We are working together. We need to cooperate." Then, I worked in Brisbane. There were always people of different origins, different nationalities. Then Townshead, right at the top, and you had Aboriginal, Caucasian, Asian, Indian. Up in North Queensland, it's a little cane-farming. So you have a lot of southern Europeans, Italian, Greek. You have a very big Italian community.

I: For the Asian students you have taught, were they in a large group?

S: No, there were only ever the odd one or two in your class. Probably quite a few throughout school. But, in a particular class, it would be just a luck of the draw. It could be one or just three of them.

I: What did you teach them?

S: English and then Literature English. Geography, History and Legal Study, which is really interesting.

I: What is the level of English of the Asian students you have taught?

S: They weren't too bad. Most of them were, when you think about it, probably from businessmen family who had business. This is directly from Chinese, a large community of Australia-born Chinese. The Chinese came out to Australia in the 1800 not long after Australia was settled. They came out in about the 1850 in the Gold Rush in Australia, really early. Settlers only came in about 1830s. So, there are really big Australian Chinese community in Australia. But then, there are businessmen resettling before 1997. Most of them are reasonably good in English. The Chinese students are very very clever and smart.

I: What academic levels or "band" school have you taught at home?

S: No, we don't do this. We don't band our schools whatsoever. Students have to go to school they live near in a certain radius unless they apply to the top schools and they have to be good at sports, good at music and good at academic things. And then, you have private schools. So, we don't have levels. Within class, we don't have streaming neither. But that's coming back. What they have

started to do is to have a top class and a bottom class and everyone else would be in the middle. So, the top class would be pushed to their academic best. The remedial class would get the help they need. But everybody else, you could be right up here just miss out this far. So, you have good kids, medium kids and you know. No level.

I: Before coming to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your job as a NET to be like in terms of teaching, like teaching style, class size, role etc?

S: I guess when you go to the interview, the Education Department wants to see examples of the variety of lessons and your ideas, and you take examples along. And you think, "Wow! This is going to be good." Now, you find out that they got the crazy British system. It's dreadful. So, it is disappointing. I think you feel you come in all aspired and then you are limited. You have very few teaching day, a lot of wasted days, a lot of wasted exams, a lot of time wasted on exams. Very few teaching days than other countries. The EMB doesn't take into account the non-teaching days here. You will find that you have got a lot to teach in a very little time. You have to teach to the exams and that is not the way to teach a language. It's very disappointing. It's not creative work. It's not challenging. It doesn't stimulate the brain. The class size is ridiculous. To have forty-something students in a class, in any class, in any subject is ridiculous. But in a language class, it's even worse. At home, you can't have more than thirty. In junior class, you can't have more than twenty-five. Usually senior class is a lot smaller. So, to be in a room with say forty-three bodies is like [laughter]. I guess it's disappointing in that way. The reality is disappointing. And the fact that you really can't do anything creative. They want you to be creative but they don't give you any freedom or flexibility. Everyone got to be at this by this time so that they can do this and this. Everyone got to be at this by this time so that they can do this time.

The teaching style is just the teaching to test. It's terrible. Fill in the blank worksheets. Students can't do it if they don't know the language. They can't do it in exams either. Preparation of exam materials is totally different here. At home, you have to create your own unit. Your unit can be based around a theme or a piece of literature. And then you have to find the resources you want and you have to do them yourselves. It's a lot harder. And then you have to say for example, in this unit or work, you might have to do six pieces of assessment. You might have to do a written piece, an oral piece. And then, a test. Oh no, we don't do test. May be two written pieces and an oral piece. So then, you look at the theme and the literature you use. And you look at what you have to do by the

end of the year. By the end of the year, you have to have a folder. Say for junior, maybe nine pieces of work. Six of those pieces will have to be written, three will have to be focused. You will have to have a narrative, creative piece, persuasive piece. In oral, you will have to have an individual presentation. You will have to have a drama. You could then have something else, you know radio programme or whatever. So then, you decide what fits your unit. So you have to say, "OK. Now this unit lends itself to an argumentative essay, maybe a drama script." So then, you create your piece of assessment, your sheets and work for that. Sometimes, we work in team. So then, might be like the school I taught at last, was the biggest school in Queensland, we had sixteen Year 11 or sixteen Year 12 classes. So then we would be divided into two, five or six or something. Five teachers will be called recourses. We had to write up our programmes at the beginning of the year. So that we will be doing this when you are doing this. So we had to sit together and then, you might work together and share ideas, share pieces you know. But it wasn't done like here. You know you set this paper and you set this paper. Basically, you go and find a book and photocopy it. So, very different.

I: What expectation did you hold for the classroom?

S: I wasn't shocked. But the classrooms are bare except for the form classes what they do. I was amazed that in a language classroom you can't put up things. I would have visuals in no matter what subject I taught. Unlike the back wall is full of their class. They have back wall competition for Christmas and Easter. It's OK for class period. But they should have places where I will be able to put things up. So, back home, I had a room, my room. Students come to me. My Form Six would be here and my Form Three would be here. So the classes I have would have a space. And then as we are learning something you put it up you know. It's my room. And then when the kids are in there, it's our room and it is ours. It is our wall. It works better that way. What they tried to do is to match up. If they get a home room, you get a home class. But you would teach that class for that subject you have. So, say F.1 in English. Their home class is based on English, their English class. So their home room teacher would be the English teacher and that their home room would be where they have their class, which would be the English teacher's room. So, you go to other classes for their other subjects. So their home teacher is their class teacher for one subject. Their room is the teacher's room. And that in some way, it's a lot easier. But here, where you are up and down. Our school is like this. Although our school is up and down, they might do different things. The ones I have been at move around as well. But here, people just pretty much stay in one room. It's a difficulty.

I: Do you have to do any administrative work?

S: No.

I: Were you expecting to do any?

S: Don't think so.

I: Could you elaborate on that please?

S: Actually, first year I didn't do anything. I didn't do any duty. This year, I was given a duty. So I have a day when I stand on the playground. But I didn't have to do the SARS duty in the morning. I didn't have to stand at the lunch hour. No, I get nothing. They didn't give me anything.

I: Do you have any after-school responsibilities?

S: Yes. I have two: the English Room and the English Club. But, it's boring because the kids don't come. There are too many activities and English is the last thing they want to do. So, I just sit up there and no one would come. And then English Club, we have activities. We might get four little kids play scrabble. I tried to play a movie every Wednesday but no one would come. We did have a coffee shop, but we had that during the day. The kids like the idea of having coffee. That was really successful. Kids like the idea of having coffee. It's like a dollar for a coffee and they get two biscuits. And then, we made it they had to answer. First time, we just gave it to them. The second time, they paid for their coffee and they had to answer an English question, work out things to get their biscuits. But after school, I volunteered to do things. So, my husband comes in sometimes and we do F.7 oral. I was before SARS, working with a F.4 class. Francais, Mr Lee, the vice-principal had a science class of girls who were really keen to learn English and he caught them reading at the back of the class. So he set up a scheme, and I thought for a while, 'Why wasn't I asked?' Because there are a lot of things going on in the school which I don't know about. They created an English news centre, but they don't tell me. It doesn't make sense. I now do that, but since SARs we haven't and we were going to start yesterday, but he said no, exams are coming up, they just want to study. But basically next year they have asked me to take the enhancement classes. Up until now they have paid another NET to come in on Saturday, but now that money is getting tight they've asked me to do it, in lieu of a class. I still have my F.6 and F.7 class but I will have these F.1 and F.2 classes after school. They gave me a choice, but I said I didn't want to work on Saturday. I would prefer to work in the afternoon, and have my evening and weekends free.

I: What were you expecting your students level of English to be like before you came to Hong Kong?

S: I expected it to be better than it is. I thought that they would have Primary

school training and that there would be a set standard, but it's like any subject. Having said that, I was really disappointed in the seniors. A lot of them are too frightened to speak to you. Their classes are boring because they won't talk, they're very shy. That makes it really hard. I didn't realize – you're given a textbook and a reader, and I thought they would be at the appropriate level for the class, but I got this class, and they didn't understand not only me but they cannot understand the book, not even the F.1 workbook. If you ask them to read this, they don't know what it means. They can't do the exercises. Then I found out that the local teachers read out all the instructions in Chinese, and therefore the kids like that because they can do the work. The kids that have me have to struggle with English only, I was very surprised. I said, 'Why are we reading a reader that they can't read?' We started another reading programme, that parents read at home. I recorded all the stories onto CDs. They have to read the book, then listen to the CD for pronunciation and then they have to read the story to their parents again, and their parents sign it. This has improved some of them. I'm very disappointed in the level of English generally.

I: Before coming to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your relationship with colleagues to be like?

S: I didn't know, I really didn't know. If you spoke to a wide range of NETs, everyone's would be different. You have to include yourself. Sometimes I sit in this staffroom and I feel invisible. So, when I feel invisible and a little bit down. They might be all in the middle talking and laughing, and I'll sit there and think 'They haven't included me. I can either sit here and feel miserable, or I can do something about it.' So I stand up and I say 'What's happening?' Straight away someone will tell me in English and then they'll include me. So it's up to teachers sometimes, and it depends on your personality. If you're quiet and don't interact with people, you'll just sit there and winge about it, which is what they do. I've always got along well with most people, but there are always some people that are just not going to like you, no matter what you do. There's nothing you can do about that. When I was young it used to really bother me, but now that I'm old as long as it doesn't affect me, it's okay. You have to train yourself to think like that. It takes a long time sometimes.

I: How do you train yourself?

S: It depends. I used to be too sensitive. I used to worry about what people thought. I started a process of not allowing what other people think to affect me. I'm a good person, and I shouldn't allow my feelings and emotions to be affected by other people in that way. Bit by bit, it took me years, because I was really super sensitive.

I: How did you prepare yourself to teach in Hong Kong?

S: I went and did a TESOL course. In our church we had some Hong Kong people, so I used to chat with them. Then I geographically oriented myself with Hong Kong.

I: Did you learn anything about Hong Kong schools or classrooms in general?

S: No. I knew they used the British system, so I knew how to be prepared for exams. I knew that the British system had been in trouble for years, so I expected, you know. But there was nothing else I could do except to take the TESOL course. I spoke to this school's previous NET by email, and she was bit negative. She had a discipline problem.

I: Did the information you obtained have any influence on your teaching in Hong Kong now?

S: No, not really because each class is different. I have 6A and 6B and what works with 6A doesn't work with 6B. You have to take it as you find it. Even talking to different NETs and what works for them won't work for your school.

I: How do Hong Kong schools differ from schools you have taught in in Australia, in terms of physical appearance, or the size of the school?

S: The size is similar. 800 to 1200 is the average size at home, so this school is similar. The physical layout is different, but only in the modern schools. If you were in an inner-city school, you can't expand. They only ever have 2 stories. We had a lot more space, and a sports ground. As the new schools were built, they were on very large properties. The schools were just one level and they're set out beautifully in blocks for different subjects. There are lots of trees, grass and space for students to sit. So, it's very different physically.

I: How about the school policy and the school culture?

S: Similar. Every school tries to drum-up school support and create a sense of identity. For the culture, we don't have a discipline team – every teacher is responsible, so it's not like here, but we have a form master for each form and they can conduct the meetings. In assemblies, the forms meet in different places, and we give out information and hold competitions. We don't have the ECA at school. We just have the sports training, music and drama; but the Girl Guides and all that have nothing to do with the school. Teachers would not be asked to do anything after school. The culture is different – it's your job, not your life. Here it seems to be your life. You would never ask a teacher to take a class after school, you would never ask them to come in at the weekend,

you would never ever ask them to do anything in the holidays. Schools are shut. The culture is very, very different.

I: How about your relationship with your colleagues. Are there any differences?

S: The difference is, I think teachers socialize at lunchtime but not after school or at weekends. They don't personally socialize. Generally speaking, people have their own families and their own life. Back home it's the same, but sometimes you will make friends with a colleague and so you will do things together, you will go out together. That seems to be a big difference, in relationships. But back home you would have more fights, more arguments. Here, if you have an argument it is quite low key, but at home if you disagree with someone it's quite visible in the staffroom.

I: Are the fights usually about work matters?

S: Oh yes, yes.

I: How about the staffroom atmosphere. Are there any differences?

S: I think there's a big difference. In Australian schools you have your desk, but you also have a community table and you eat lunch together at that table. Here, they eat on and off all day at their desks. They just talk at lunchtime. You can discuss anything – classes, students, films, anything. It's a good break. It's a distinct teachers' time. At home [Australia] you don't have to be seen to be busy. If you're spare, you can sit there and have a cup of coffee, and no-one will stare at you. We do a lot of work at home, whereas here a lot of teachers stay here and do their work, and then go home and do nothing. So, the staffroom is different. In some ways it's friendlier, because it's my people. You would walk in and say hello and you might chat about something. But here, I'm eating breakfast and preparing things, so it's not quite as free. You've got to be seen to be busy.

I: How did your philosophy change?

S: I tried not to think about it. I tried to adjust and manage the best I can. I joined in things when I can, do my work when I can. Try not to interrupt if someone's speaking, but sometimes I have to. I just try to fit in.

I: How about the furniture arrangement in the classroom, are there any differences?

S: It depends on the school. Most of the schools I have been in were big. So, the new staffrooms were really big. Some teachers are in older buildings with only narrow little places, but they'll still be visible to each other. Like, when I sit

down, I'm not visible to the staffroom. I can't see the other person on the other side of the desk. Whereas in most of our staffrooms we can see each other, so that's a big difference in staffroom layout. And of course the table in the centre makes a big difference. We tend to have communal lunches more.

I: How about the furniture arrangement in the classroom?

S: We have generally speaking, the different shaped tables so you can very quickly put them together to make a circle. Two tables will make that sort of a circle. It's like a pentagon. I can actually walk to every part of the room and it's much friendlier.

I: What's the classroom atmosphere like?

S: I guess it's similar. The teacher and the students create that. If you've got a class that doesn't speak much then it's hard to have a good classroom environment.

I: How do you address the principal, deputy-head or panel-head in your previous schools?

S: Most of the panel-heads wanted to be considered like a normal teacher. The deputies, some were very lax and easy-going, others haven't got time to see you. The principals, the same – some very relaxed, others, you know, you knock on the door and go in. So, it depends, you know, on the way the admin want to be. Generally in Australia they're freer.

I: Do you address them on first-name basis or last-name basis?

S: Oh yes, first-name basis always.

I: How about now?

S: Well, Chinese people refer to each other as Miss. Lee or Miss. Lam or Mr. Chu. That's how they address each other all the time. So, for me, I cheat, I ask them if they have an English name.

I: Before you came to Hong Kong, what were you expecting your students' needs to be?

S: Just, I guess, language needs. I didn't think of anything else. I just thought they'll need lots of help with pronunciation practices and lots of help with getting along with me.

I: And how about now?

S: Well, now I know that they have many...they come from many social and economic backgrounds, and they have problems, and so they have other needs as

well. One of my F.7 students came to me in tears and I hugged her. She said she'd never been hugged in her life. They're just like any children – they need to be loved.

I: How did you learn to know your students' needs?

S: I can see. I can hear. I can read body language. And, I guess on most things. Sometimes if the students appear under stress, I just say 'Hey guys, I'm free after class if anyone wants to talk to me.' Sometimes, if I can see a child that is upset, I might just at the end of the lesson, I might just quietly say, 'Is everything okay? Are you alright?' You just have to be aware.

I: For all the difficulties you have mentioned, was it difficult to adjust to the changes?

S: I guess so in some ways. You can adjust and you can do it willingly, or you can adjust and do it grudgingly and complain. You adjust to the change, no matter how difficult they are.

I: Did you use any strategies?

S: Well, you use every possible strategy that you know as a human being. You use your professional strategies that have worked in the staffroom. You use your personal strategies to talk to the office staff and treat them like they're one of you. Every strategy that you can think of as a person. Continue being polite. Continue not complaining even though every circular that appears on my desk is in Chinese. You just use everything you have.

I: Did you have any previous contact with this school before you came to Hong Kong?

S: I had contact with the previous NET which was limited. But Francis interviewed me, over the phone. I had contact with him.

I: What is the banding of this school?

S: Well, it was a band 2 in the old one. So, a high band 2 means a low band 1 now.

I: Do you think this is an appropriate banding level?

S: I guess so. But, it's very bottom of band 1.

I: Why?

S: Because of the level of the children. It's also the level of the school curriculum. It's not offering the change the EMB wants.

I: Could you describe the learning culture of this school?

S: It's reasonable. But for English it's poor

I: Is it the same as what you were expecting to see?

S: No, I did come here thinking they would want to learn English. And then you find out that they don't want to learn English.

I: What is the medium of instruction?

S: CMI, but EMI in some things. The school wanted to be EMI, but they had to go CMI.

I: You mentioned that all the circulars you have are in Chinese. How about the staff meetings?

S: Chinese.

I: Do you get a translator?

S: I have a colleague that sits next to me and translates.

I: How do you feel about that?

S: Well, it doesn't worry me because I was expecting it to be in Chinese. But sometimes it's a waste of my time, really. I just sit there for 1½ to 2 hours.. It's boring.

I: What duties are you assigned to do at this school?

S: I have classes. I have 6A and 6B, but I only have all of the class half of the time. So, I teach, I share. I have form 6 for reading comprehension, writing and oral. Mr. Lee has them for practical skills and the listening, and we share the grammar. And I have a form 1 class, half of the class. Next year I will have the form 6 and form 7 class, whole class, plus the enhancement class after school.

I: Have there been any changes since your first year of teaching?

S: Yes, when I first came here I had 3 full classes and it was a heavy work-load. So, in the second year they lightened it for me.

I: How many hours do you have to teach in a cycle?

S: I teach the same as everybody else. I probably have less now. This year I do a lot of proofreading of documents. Maybe 2/3 of an ordinary teacher.

I: Could you describe the major challenges you have encountered?

S: Coping with the curriculum. Coping with kids that insist on speaking Chinese. Coping with F.6 students that just want to sleep in your lessons. Coping with boring work. That's about it.

I: How do you overcome them?

S: I made a rule in my F.6 class that if I see them falling asleep they have to stand up and do ten star-jumps. Speaking Chinese – it's usually the juniors. The only thing I can do is refer them to their homeroom teacher because they do it deliberately – they just give you a mouthful of Chinese.

I: What did you think were the possible causes of these challenges?

S: Well, F.6 going to tutorial school at night-time and sleeping in your lesson. Students' who English isn't good enough so they speak Chinese. A busy work-load and trying to cut down as much as you can, and doing what you've got to do.

I: How did you react to those challenges?

S: I guess with annoyance. It's annoying having students sleeping and talking Chinese in your class. It's annoying having silly, busy, useless work..

I: Are you satisfied with the way you reacted?

S: Well, I've coped. I've tried to find the easiest way for me and the kids. So, I guess so.

I: How about now, do you still face the same challenges?

S: Yes.

I: Do you have any other, different challenges?

S: I guess there're ones that come up every now and then.

I: Are you going to try out any new solutions?

S: Oh, you're always trying out new solutions. You just try and find solutions that fit that particular class or person.

I: How would you describe a typical class of yours?

S: In some ways pretty mundane, in that I've got to follow the system. In other ways, I can incorporate naturally the four skills of the language. For the local teachers, it's reading today. For me, I point out that it helps their reading, their writing and it will help with their oral because they have to be able to read to present. I'm constantly showing them the integration of the skills.

I: How would you describe your students?

S: My senior students, there are a number of students in both classes that want to work. But, if had to pick one thing, it's talking. Even the good students talk when the teacher is talking. How can you learn another language when you're talking?

I: What are the major sources of pressure in teaching now?

S: The major sources of pressure in Hong Kong for me, as a NET. The major pressure is one of trying to be this NET teacher and teach creatively and teach thinking in a system that doesn't teach thinking and is exam orientated.

I: What are the major sources of support that you are receiving?

S: I guess that the good thing is that I can talk to Francis. And sometimes you can talk to your colleagues and say that you're having trouble teaching in this way, but you can't do that too much, you can only say a little bit. So, probably the major support is from your own husband and other NET teachers.

I: How did you adjust to the changes?

S: It's a matter of adapting – you have to. The priority is the deadline. If you want to incorporate your own thing, you just have to when you can.

I: Could you describe your most positive experience as a NET teacher?

S: That's hard. It's like the reward is when students' say to you 'Thank you for teaching me, I've really learnt something.' That usually doesn't come until the end of the year, and it's usually only with senior classes. It's rewarding when classes that you've had, will want to come and talk to you and things like that.

I: Why is that the most positive one for you?

S: Because then you know that you've done something. That you've taught someone and they've learnt something. That you were a benefit.

I: What was your worst experience?

S: I had this student who I could see was going to be a problem from day one. When I wanted something to be done about, nothing was done. In the end the child was expelled. It's silly having a discipline system that works in that way – you have to get to the problem straight away. They tend to make silly allowances – he didn't understand you. That's rubbish, he knew exactly what I said.

I: What was the student doing?

S: He used to just constantly, constantly do things to disrupt the class. He was always saying things in Chinese. But, on the other hand, he was very clever,

in a funny sort of way. He would give you things and be really nice. Then one day he was sitting right at the front, and he said something in Chinese in a very, very soft voice with a smile on his face. And I knew that what he'd said was absolutely dreadful because of the way he'd said it and because of the reaction of the students around him. The boys sniggered and the girls were horrified. At the end of the lesson I asked some of the good students to explain it to me, but they couldn't explain. Then they wrote it down. I took it to the office and then said that I would not accept this student in my class again. I had tried to work with him, he always made excuses. Then he got involved with the triads and other things. Then he got expelled, and that was wrong. He should have been dealt with on day one, when I said that he was going to be a problem, and I was disappointed. They should have dealt with him earlier. I wanted to work with him. I asked to work with him.

Appendix K

Transcript (Second Interview with Freda)

Interview#: 2
Topic area: Education Philosophy/ Goals and Expectations
Informant: Freda
Date: 3 October, 2003.
Length: 59:48 minutes

I = Interviewer

S = Subject

I: How is school so far?

S: Pretty good. It's quite happy. It's a good beginning.

I: After coming back to school, have you experienced any adaptation problems?

S: No. it's quite a lot easier than the first year.

I: And have you encountered any problems that you told me in the previous interview?

S: I don't remember what we've talked about in the previous interview.

I: Uh, the students prefer to talk in Cantonese in class, they prefer to sleep rather than listen, and the motivation.

S: One of my classes is still a bit like that: not high motivation, they tend not to be a little bit inattentive, but the other class is really quite excellent. So it's 1D and 1E, same form, same level of learner, but one class have a different personality and feel than the other class.

I: Now we will talk about your previous teaching experience before moving on to the current one. So, can you share your education or teaching philosophy with me?

S: It's a very big question. We can spend 2 or 3 hours just talking about that. I think basically it's that learning should be fun, and that school should be a place to enjoy to be, and that the students should be responsible for doing most of the work, not the teacher.

I: And why do you think learning should be fun as part of the education philosophy?

S: I think it enhances the motivation, and I think that's enhances the enjoyment of the class, both for the teacher and the student, so, I think, it reduces their stress, and it creates a situation where you feel comfortable learning.

I: Can you describe the essential features of your own education?

S: Mm, I think my...my own personal...when I was a student? [Mm.] It's quite traditional.

I: What do you mean by 'traditional'?

S: Quite teacher-centred, quite lecture-based, and taking notes, studying notes, writing compositions. Wasn't 'role-learning', but it was mostly teacher-directed and lecture-based.

I: Has there been any change to your teaching philosophy since you came to Hong Kong?

S: Uh, in a sense, when I first came, you tend to teach the way we were taught, that's the norms for most teachers, so because I was taught in a very traditional teacher-centred, lecture-based way, I finished high school in my 1985, so it was 20 years ago, education then was not very innovative, or very creative, so...(giggle) students waving. So, when I first arrived in Hong Kong, the difficulty was that I wasn't familiar with the students, or the curriculum, or the school. And when you are in a unfamiliar situation, you tend to fall back on what's familiar to you, you tend to do the easiest thing, just to keep a float, because you're in such a strange waters, you do everything the easiest way you can now. So I tended to, when I first arrived, also had a very teacher-centred, grammar-oriented, lecture-based lesson. That was for the first month or so. But that's not what I believe is truly effective, and it's not the way I'd like to teach, so I didn't like to teach in that way, and I don't like being that way. So, what's been nice for me is that I've lost my educational theory a little bit, and now I've been able to regain it and get back to...

I: How did you lose it and how did you regain it?

S: Well, as I said, [OK.] I lost it because in a completely unfamiliar place, you have to fall back on what's the most familiar, like here, how I was taught. But how I was taught to teach, and how I taught in previous systems in Japan and in Canada was not lecture-based, was not teacher-centred. It's much more activity-oriented, cooperative, student-centred learning. That was how I was taught to be a teacher, and how I was...how I taught in my first few years, both in Canada and in Japan. So, it was pretty nice for me, and I would like to get back to that, so I was able to get back to my philosophy. So I would say that my education philosophy changed at all, but I wasn't true to my philosophy when I first arrived, just to survive, and now I've been able to get back to that.

I: How do you define 'school culture'?

S: How do you mean? That's a very big question.

I: Um, what is your personal definition of 'school culture'? What does 'school

culture' mean to you?

S: You mean overall atmosphere at the school, [Mm.] the overall feeling.

I: Anything else? Do you think parents have any influence on the school culture?

S: I think they should, I think the school culture is how the students feel about being at school, the overall feeling when you walk in. are the students happy or playful? Are they excited about learning? Are they doing just the bare minimum, just pretending? Or are they actually going home, and practicing and learning? For example, my students have to do a quiz everyday in class, 5 words only, but it's 5 words everyday. To be successful, they really only need to do about 5 to 15 minutes of homework. So if them understood, then it's much easier to do small manageable chunks, and have daily learning, daily study and daily habit. So that it's daily reinforcement. Others have no motivation whatsoever, even though the task is set so that they can be successful, and I don't believe that it make any sense for a student to write a test out of 100 marks and fail. They don't feel good, the teacher doesn't feel good; it makes nobody happy. But 5 marks everyday, it's a way to build success and build happiness, enjoyment, and confidence. So, when I see that students are given only 5 words to study, and I don't see that they study, I wondered where their parent is. I wondered how could that parent not be more involved. Why is that parent not quizzing their children on their 5 words? Where is their contribution? I think that far too much emphasis is placed on what the teachers need to do to make the students succeed. Teachers are constantly giving hundred percent effort, well, at least, I know I am, so I am stunned that when I see that students can't even study 5 words. It's very little to ask for them, and it's very little to ask for their parent to be involved and be active in that process. But...so I think that, um, in terms of parents, I would like to see more involvement.

I: How would you describe the school culture of this school here?

S: Quite good. Quite good. It's...school overall tends to be a little punitive, but they are working hard to make it more reward-based school. This school...I think the teachers really work hard to help the students here. The staff is very devoted and careful to spend time with the students.

I: And how does that compare and contrast to the school culture of schools you've taught in Japan and Canada?

S: I would say the school culture here is fairly similar in some ways to the schools in Japan. Students in Japan, overall, tend to be, a little more passive, so you need to really find ways to involve them, but they also tend to be generally more obedient and more attentive. Teacher tends to be more of a figure of respect, and

school tends to be something that they took it more seriously. So...but it also is a very group-oriented society, so like here, be in a class, be a central part...the class teacher tends to play a very important role, very involved with the students. In Canada, it's a lot...quite different. We can go on a long time. The question you ask is good, but it's very general, and very big answers. So...for Canada, the school systems there... [School culture.] the school culture there is much more individual, they don't have a ...teacher to the same degree, like the class teacher. You might meet your class-teacher 4 or 5 times a year, not everyday. You have a different set of students in each class. So you would not go to Math, English, P.E., Science and Social Studies, all with the same boys and girls. It would be a completely different mix every time. So you have completely different students in every class, you will have a generally a higher motivation, because students there, if you don't pass a class, then you repeat that class. So you might be in Form 1, and have a successful mark in Math, Science and History, so in Form 2, you will be studying Math, Science and History with one or two students. But if you have not done anything in English and you failed Form 1 English, then you will repeat Form 1 English. Because the classes are mixed, the timetable was very easy to have you study some Form 2 subjects, and some Form 1 subjects. So, nobody wants to do English Form 1 2 times, it's not interesting to them to do it again. And they don't want to be away from their friends, and they don't want to be with younger students. So, generally, the big difference I find between Hong Kong and Canada is that, at least, in Canada, students don't want to fail. They will do anything they can to get 50% to go to the next level, if that means going to summer school, they will go to summer school; if that means coming in, the teachers do extra work, they will do it. They just don't want to do it again. Here, in Hong Kong, students don't care about failing. If they don't pass Form 1 English, it doesn't matter because they will just go to Form 2 anyway. Unless there are completely failure of the students, they might repeat the whole form. That's quite rare, as I understand. Most time, they'll just get promoted anyway, regardless of how much work you do or how much effort. So you've taken away one of the key motivating factors, which is 'not wanting to repeat'. You just...we just simply promote them through and let them do badly every year. And they, unfortunately, just start to misbehave, worse and worse every year, because there's more and more they don't understand. So I think that was one thing I would like to change.

I: And how would you define 'learning culture'?

S: A 'learning culture' would be to deal about how students and teachers feel about learning.

I: And why do you define 'learning culture' in this way?

S: I just do, you know.

I: How would you describe the learning culture here in this school?

S: It's hard to say that, really. I think I know only what I see, and I don't get to see what happen in other classes do. So, my impression is most of the teachers do their best to involve the students, and make the class great fun and enjoyable. They try to challenge the students, and give them work that is not too easy but not too difficult, and...I would say, overall, I think the learning culture here is quite good. But it's really a hard question to answer because you really know that I would be sitting in on other class, sitting on the Science class, Math class, P.E. class, and there is no time for us to do that, so I can only go base on what students say, and teacher say, but it's not a first-hand impressions.

I: And how does it differ from the learning culture in Japan and Canada?

S: It's more or less the same.

I: In what way?

S: But, I think, you know, that it about how students feel about learning and how teachers feel about teaching, and that's to me what the learning culture is, so like teachers all around the world, generally trying to the best for the students, and teach in a way that they can learn and be successful. Students here, I think the main difference is that they don't see their own role as much, their own responsibility for learning. They see it as being something that the teacher should give them, as oppose to something that they should give themselves. I think they expect the teacher to do it all, and that they really don't have to do very much, so...not as active as other countries, at least in the junior forms. In the senior forms, you can see a difference, I think, Form 6 and 7, you'll see extremely motivated learners because they take responsibilities to themselves. But the junior forms are really what I'm referring to, I've say that, that's what I teach, so...

I: And how is 'learning culture' different from 'school culture' base on your definitions?

S: 'Learning culture' is how the students and teachers feel about learning, the actual what happen in the classroom. And to me, the 'school culture' is the overall running over of the hallways, how they feel when they come at 8 o'clock, before they go to class, recess, lunch, after school...the overall pulse and feel of the school. It's 'school culture' to me.

I: And what factors affect teaching?

S: Every thing. The strangest things: dress, weather, climate, everything affects teaching.

I: And how?

S: There're study shows a teacher who's wearing a bright red dress versus a teacher that is wearing a brown dress will have a different affect on the class, simply because of the colour they're wearing. Every teaching is affected by thousands of different factors. Students will learn differently at the time of day, whether it's before lunch or after lunch, it's a hot day or a cool day or rainy day; Friday or Wednesday, how much sleep the teacher had the night before, or whether the teacher had a good breakfast or not, or maybe the teacher just had a break period or just came on a really bad class. So many things affect teaching, it's immeasurable. I mean, it's a huge question.

I: How about violate?

S: That's same...basically the same answer, I mean, I find that I can have my students on first class in the morning, and then, I can see exact the same group of students, again latter that day, at the eighth period, and there're big difference to them. Same class, same teacher, but night and day, night and day. It really depends what had just happened previous to them coming in. If they came out of a P.E. class, hot and sweaty and exhausted, then I may need to do a very quiet and relaxing activity, and I will tell them they can have their water bottles, so drink if they like, they can go buy a drink or juice if they need to, ever though that's officially not allowed, but, I mean, they're dripping their sweats, so...there is some...or it depends, they've just came out of a class, where the teacher was yelling at them for being lazy or stupid, or not paying attention, they will come in in a totally different way. So, there's ten thousand things that affect both teaching and learning.

I: What was the relationship between teachers and students like in Canada and Japan?

S: Uh, Canada, uh, student and teacher relationship tends to be less involved, overall, not because that teachers care less, but because the teachers have less contact with the students. On average, I would have about 240 or 210 students, and I would see them above 3 times a week. So each class would be about 30 students, and you would have 7 classes, so...about 3 times a week. So you're familiar with them, of course, you know their names, and you know about them, but the sheer numbers, it means you have less of a close relationship generally. The close relationship you have with the students in Canada would be through extra-curricular activities: couching, or music, or drama, those kinds of things. In Japan, teacher tends to be vary a lot in student's life: going to their home, which has to be high respect, with 'sensay'. That 'sensay' means teacher, but that also means doctor, and ones who has previous wisdom, so even the name

means someone who has 'wisdom' and experience' that we don't have, that the average person doesn't have, so the title itself command respect, as well as the school system. And there, education is seen as to be very important. So...in Hong Kong, I think the class teachers are very involved, and the subject teacher is, perhaps, a little less involved because they have more students, not as much as a close relationship. And of course, for NET teacher, generally, because of the language and culture barrier, they have, perhaps less bonding; 'they can't be as familiar with the students because there's always that barrier, as I've said, we can have, I think I enjoy with my students a very very playful. They tell me other very popular teacher they don't know, but, you know, the students are always waving and smiling, and that's nice. When I walk in a classroom, they usually cheer or laugh, which is nice to see. Um, not all classes, but some. And, so...that's nice, but there isn't the same kind of bonding because of the language barrier, you know, I can only have, sort of, very basic conversations with all the students.

I: And do you feel comfortable with the relationship now in Hong Kong?

S: Pretty good.

I: Why?

S: I think I am comfortable with things where they are because I realise that I don't have the ability to change that necessarily, so I just make myself happy with the current situation as. So I would love to have a relationship that I wouldn't had, say, with my students as in Canada, but that's not possible. I can't be involved, you know...for example, in Canada, I have been...like a special girl I was couching, you know, any problems they had, any difficulties they had in their lives, personal and relationship, anything like that, that would be something that I would be involved back in Canada. But that's just not possible here. But here, I can have students be very excited about visiting my home, for example, and what can we buy to provide my baby, or things like that. So, you know, you just find the way to the build of the relationship, even if it's more superficial, because you can't have the level of communication that you would have in your own country. You just have to find a way to build relationships. You know, it's not necessarily what I would have back home, but it's still has its merits. Still it's nice.

I: And how did you maintain the relationship with your students in Canada?

S: How did I? [Mm.] I've said when through the time of couching and...

I: How about in Japan?

S: Um, again, more like here, having the students do special lunches, together, in a classrooms, or invite them over tea at home as a group of students, those kinds

of things that you wouldn't get really do that back in Canada.

I: And how do you maintain the relationship with students now in Hong Kong? Similar to what you did in Japan?

S: Um, yeah, similar to Japan.

I: And, why couldn't you invite the students to home when you were in Canada?

S: I live in ...you just... [OH, I see.] The legal systems there.

I: And how did you maintain the relationship with the panel head? Uh, or the department head? When you were in Canada?

S: It's quite different there. There's a department head, and but each teacher is quite individual and quite autonomous in Canada, you don't generally have the same level of cooperation between teachers that you would have here. At least, that's my experience. So, here I find, sort of, teachers work together to create lesson plans, work together to have tests, pre-tests and there's a lot more trying to time the units, and make sure that we all study the same thing, and have the same focus, the steam of work, those kind of things, you know, I've never seen that in Canada. Never been told that I should have unit 1 preceded by the end of cycle 3. I'm just, I've heard of...generally, it happens by nature of, you know, teachers following the same textbook, and follow at about the same speed, generally, we will find that most people will be around the place in the curriculum at around the same time, but it's not because they received a memo and that's what the teachers need to do.

I: And how did you maintain the relationship with the panel or the department head in Japan?

S: Uh, again, very different system there. Japan was a term-teaching situation, so we weren't really dealing with a panel head so much as the individual teacher your team teacher one, um. And here, in Hong Kong, you know, it just, uh, a lot of communications, making sure that everybody knows what you're doing, and why, and how, and...

I: Everybody in the department has to know?

S: Um, well, I work with most of the English teachers, and the team teacher situation now, so I think there's only...there're only 2 teachers I don't actually teach with in our school, because they teach the senior forms only. And even those teachers, we have extra-curricular English activities together as joint project, so I pretty much work with everybody. So, yeah, you must let everybody know what's going on.

I: And could you describe a particular class that you have the most problem with?

S: The most problems with? [Mm.] Ah, probably, the most problems I have is with 1D class right now.

I: Could you describe the problems?

S: Overall, the class...from day 1, I was told that the class is a challenging and difficult class. Their class teacher found that, even in Chinese, they don't understand the...having follow the directions. She ask them on the first day to, you know, bring money for these textbooks, or they have to bring parents note from home about contacting information, checking their address and phone numbers, such things. Basically, the beginning of the year has a lot of administrative work, and she gave them 7 things they had to bring them next day in a class of 40 students, which is just like 6 or 7 actually had all 7 things done properly. The rest of them just didn't. So there are...just overall that class doesn't have a good climate. There is, you know, just not very disciplined, not very self-disciplined. One teacher told me she finds them very selfish, as in just focusing on whether they wanted to do at that time, they're not interested in paying much attention to the teacher. And that wasn't in an English classroom, that was in her classroom, she just commented on how they just seem to be in their own world, and occasionally realises that they are at school in the classroom, the teacher are there, but they can sit there and play with their pen for an hour, or, you know, go through their entire pencil case and sort out all the stationary and they're just not really there.

I: How about in your class?

S: I find that we're having to play fewer games in 1D than 1E, which to me is a little surprising because 1E is 40 boys and is the lowest class in the whole school. So...we have a class that is the lowest ability of the lowest form in the lowest banding of school of Hong Kong, you would expect it's a nightmare class, particularly when it's 40 boys. Because, you know, forty 11 and 12-year-olds is...but they're great, 1E is a great class. We have a time of fun, we're able to play a lot of games, we're able to harness their energy and turn it into energy for English. Whereas 1D, we rarely get to play the same level of games, we still do activities, and try to make it more fun and interactive, but because of the lack of discipline in the class, we have to do for 1D sort of more discipline first, and teaching later. Whereas with 1E, it's the opposite. We don't have to really do much discipline because they're quite motivated to learn.

I: Do you do team-teaching in 1D?

S: All of my classes are team-teaching.

I: So two teachers appear at the same time in the classroom?

S: Yeah.

I: So, what is the role of the local teacher in the classroom?

S: It really depends on their personality. The 1E is the same teacher and I teach together all the time. So in that class, it's very much co-teacher, where we sit down once a week, and we determine the focus for the next cycle. We plan the activities, we decide together what's working and what's not working and hope they like it. He is also very very playful and funny, and we just laugh a lot. And in the first week, he would say things like, 'well, I'm not sure, this activity. It's look like a little bit chaotic.' I would say things like, 'well, I think no matter what we do, 1E 40 boys is going to be chaotic and noisy, we can either try to kill that, or we can try to embrace it.' So, he's given us a benefit of a doubt, and we say, 'yeah, let's embrace the fact that they are noisy and loud and physical and boys. And we take them out to the hall, and we make them run around in an English class, and take them down to the playground. They haven't done that yet, but we've take them down to the hall and let them run around, and you have loud music and throwing bean bags around the room, like a baseball game, because, we might as well let them enjoy that: being boys, and being physical and being crazy. With 1D, I have 1, 2, 3, 4...four different teachers come and join me, well, I have to check that out, I'm not sure. Is that 4 or...? With 1D, I have 1, 2, 3, yeah. Four different teachers who come and join me. One teacher come 4 classes out of the 8, another teacher comes to 2 classes out of the 8, and other...the other 2 teachers just come one class a year. So they are the role is quite different, they're more like assistant teacher, and they're there to...generally they tend to do more of the disciplining. One teacher says he gets to be the bad guy there. He...they also tend to pause to clarify, and... [In Chinese?] Yes, because we've got Form 1 low level students. And I speak first only English, that could be stressful and difficult to the students, so, to clarify communication and our translation is necessary. So the teacher help us. The whole approach to my teaching this year was one that I would be able to create the kind of atmosphere last year that I wanted to teach, and I told them that I wanted to team-teach, and I wanted to lower the class sizes, and I wanted X, Y, Z. and they said, 'sure, yes, go on'. And gave me everything I wanted, and it's work out very nicely. I think 1D is a little challenging still, but they were coming around, they were starting to realise that I will give them games and fun if they listen for the short amount of time that we ask them to listen, 1E got that right away. Well, they understood that we have English for 18 minutes, and then I will probably talk for 10, and let them do stuff for 17. And if they listen for that 10, they can have fun for that other 17. Uh, 1D hasn't figure that out yet. Or they haven't figure that out, but they are not decided to listen for that 10. 1E got

that, they are like, 'Oh, yeah, we will listen, you don't talk that much. You don't ask for pretty much homework. Yeah, we can do that.' It's like a maturity difference. I don't know why.

I: Uh, could you describe the class that you have the least problem with?

S: Uh, the least problems with? Probably 1A or 2A.

I: Why is that?

S: Those classes I teach are just oral class. It's one for a cycle only. It's team-taught. The A classes are more advanced. They understand that the oral class is the one opportunity they have to be very active with speaking English for 40 minutes straight. And they know that there's no homework, no exam in that class, it's just a chance for speaking English, and for the teacher to listen. So, those classes tend to be very motivated, very fun.

I: What are the differences in terms of the teaching approach you use here and in Canada or Japan?

S: I would say, now, in my second year, they're the same. I've been able to regain my belief about, you know, teaching being fun, learning being fun, the teacher not being the centre, the student being actively involved, the curriculum being motivating, and the work being manageable, and not being so grammar-focused, or communicative-focused. So, I would say now, my teaching look quite similar to what it would look like when it was in Japan or in Canada. But as I said, honestly, if you see me in September last year, and September this year, you'll be: 'wow, she's a different teacher'. And that's just the difference between falling back to traditional answers or being more...to my philosophy.

I: And what are the differences between the methodologies you use here and in Japan and Canada?

S: Not many. Um, I guess the only thing that's quite different is, here, I give homework, that is more role-learning based, whereas in Canada, I would never give homework that was role-learning based. But, other than that, the actual class here is quite the same, it's really the homework that differs.

I: OK. Are there any differences between the input you receive here and in Canada and Japan in determining the materials or content being taught?

S: No. seminar tends to be...I mean, I've always had a textbook pretty much in Canada, and we have a textbook here, so that generally determines what you teach. Generally in Canada, as well as here, there're specific exams that students have to take, that we have to prepare them for, so that's similar. Uh, they're tends more autonomy in Canada as to what you teach, but I've been given now in Hong Kong, tremendous autonomy as well, so, for example, in my 1E and 1D, well, actually all my classes, there's no textbook. So, 1D and 1E, we have no

textbook, we have no reader, we have no listening book, we have no dictations, we have no compositions, yet. All the things that the other classes have to do, for example, Form class 1A will have to do 6 compositions in the first term, we have zero that we have to do. We might do some, but we don't have to do any. So, we've been given a completely...I have been given the freedom to adapt the entire curriculum for 1D and 1E, and then for the oral classes I get to teach, and create my own materials.

I: Amongst the countries you have taught in before, which is the most difficult to adjust to?

S: I would say Hong Kong was the most difficult to adjust to.

I: In what ways?

S: Teachers here are very busy, and unless you let them know that you're not aware of what to do, or how you do it, they will assume you're OK. You know, you're professional, trained teacher, you've had previous experience generally. There are a few people who come to the NET programme and who are brand new teaching they never taught in that country. But for the most part, people have previous teaching experience. So they tends to be assumptions, I think, on the Hong Kong teachers part that we've been hired to do the job, because we can do the job, and therefore, they just let us go and do the job. That's a little bit of a false assumption, because, you know, it is completely different. You know, you're in a different school, different culture, different materials, different level of learners, different approaches, all sorts of things that are quite different. And so, I would say, it was harder to adjust here because it was on my own. If I were walking into a team-taught situation, like I did in Japan, then, you'll always have someone by your side to help you through the adaptation. You might plan an activity, and you go ahead and do it, and you realise that it was a disaster, the team-teacher said to you, 'wow, the reason that it didn't work because in Japan, dadadada...' and you go, 'Oh, OK, I see. I need to change it this way. I see how I can make this activity work. And you look at not only your own experience in the classroom, but you have the eyes and ears, you have your team-teacher there with you. Here, with being a solo teacher, there isn't anyone being your eyes and ears that can say to you, 'Oh, by the way, you know, you should really try this instead of that', or...such things. Or 'how are you doing?', or 'what can I do to help you?' or 'was this feeling good or was not feeling good'. They just assume that you are OK. So, that's definitely part of...

I: And that's the end of the teaching philosophy part. Do you have anything else to add to it?

S: No.

I: Then we can move on to the goals and expectation part. What expectation or plans or goals have you set for this academic year?

S: That none of my students hate English by the end of the year.

I: And why did you set this goal?

S: I think that's the most realistic. I think I can't set the goals that 90% of my students will pass English, or 10% of my students will pass English, because we're at a low level school. So, I think if I can help them all get to the end of the year and like English, then I've been successful.

I: And how are you going to achieve this goal?

S: Having lots of fun, playing lots of games, making them feel successful, reducing the stress, making the class award-based, rather than punishment-based, so, for example, my 1D class, as I mentioned, that's quite a bad class, they were given 5 words to study on Tuesday, Wednesday we had no school because of the National Holiday, and yesterday, we didn't work for English because they didn't have English on Day 6. so, I gave them the 5 words to study on Tuesday, today is Friday, 17 students, out of 40, did not pass those 5 words. They got either zero or one or two. Five words for student: lace, fan, log, wood, and wines. Not difficult words, and they have 3 days to study 5 words, 17 out of 40 didn't pass. Three students were absent, so 20 out of 40 passed. So those 20 out of 40 are being given a reward for passing.

I: And what reward is that?

S: Uh, it's a school-based system we have, where you give them a virtue apple on the computer.

I: Oh.

S: So...and they accumulate these apples and exchange for prizes or something like that. So 20 out of 40 students were given an apple today. So, when I say 'reward-based', as opposed to 'punishment-based', I think a lot of teachers would look at the 17 students and give them a detention or give them lines or yell at them, or something. But, to me, that's not effective, and it's a negative way of reinforcing. So the best way to me would be focusing on the 20 who did passed, who obviously did realise that, OK, we've got 5 words, 3 days, the easy words I can study. So focus on the 20 who did succeed. And the 17 who didn't, now they've been told to try again for Monday and see if they can be successful. So...yeah.

I: And what are the possible difficulties or challenges that you can foresee that it might prevent you from achieving your goal?

S: Well, you know, the curriculum will get more difficult. Right now, it's very easy, we've been focusing on things that are quite simple to the students, this is the

week about the year, numbers. But, you know, we are going to progress into a more challenging vocabulary, and grammar, as the year goes on, and we will lose some students, some students won't be able to handle the level of difficulty, even if I make it slow and steady and fun, and motivational. You know, there are some students already who are getting zero out of 5, on a test where they had to write the number as from one to five. O-n-e, t-w-o, and they can't do that. Well, how I'm going to teach them the past tense if they can't even learn o-n-e, t-w-o, t-h-r-e-e, or so? That would be more challenging.

I: OK. How about the possible difficulties you might face in your teaching this year?

S: I guess...just thinking, uh, you know, if class 1D continues to be a challenging class, and, you know, less ability to do the kinds of things I'd like to do simply because of their discipline. (something not clear said)

I: Is it possible to solve this problem?

S: Yeah, we will be interactive, we are trying to work on discipline in class 1D: we're talking with the class-teacher, and, you know, we've invited other teachers to come in as guest speakers of discipline committee to come and to talk with them. Not on a punitive way, but a encouraging way. You know, you are a lacking class, you have a NET teacher, you should take advantage of it, uh, you know, so, we've invited people to come in and speak, and encourage them, and try to be proactive, and solve the discipline problem we have before. It becomes a...situation.

I: In terms of your school lives, what are the similarities and differences between now and what you've experienced before the summer holiday in terms of teaching?

S: Um, I wasn't sure if it's quite different, because the teaching load and schedule are much more one that I created, so I think I feel more...not a kind of empowerment, but I feel this is what I want to be more doing, this is what how I want to be doing. And I think it's more freedom because we've got a very trusting panel head, who's watched what I have done and said, 'yeah, we'll let you go for it and try these things and see how it works'. And so...

I: How about relationship with colleagues?

S: It's good.

I: It's getting better or as good as last year?

S: Well, I would say it's nicer this year. I mean, we're more familiar. It was very good last year, there were...I find staff here as really really great. But you know, as we know each other longer, more involved in, you know, their lives, so you know more about them, you're able to say, 'oh, how's your wife doing with the

new baby?’ Because, you know, you met his wife now, I suppose to nod. And of course, for team-teaching, to me, has increase the level of communication and respect for each other. That’s one of the things that I think is really important about team-teaching is that I find the NET programme here generally having the teacher solo teach, then you’re reducing the amount of cross-benefit of the programme. So, for example, I don’t get to see strengths of the Chinese teachers because I don’t get to watch them teach. I don’t get...they don’t get my strengths of the NET teachers because they don’t get to watch me teach. So by doing the team-teaching, they’re exposed to strengths of my experience, and I’m exposed of theirs. Both can become better teachers. It’s not a one-way street; we both become better teachers. And it’s the same in Japan. I realised that for team-teaching in Japan, I realise that role-learning does have a place, memorisation does have a place in the school. And that it’s OK to have a mixed approach to teaching, that is both teacher-centred and learner-centred. And that it’s not wrong to have a more inductive or deductive approach, both were acceptable. So you start to grow as a teacher and a professional, much more, much more, and nicer.

I: And how about the relationships with students? Are there any differences?

S: Between last year and this year? Yeah, again, when they see me, I think this year is more fun, more playful. They know me a little bit more, and I know them a little bit more. ‘Oh, she’s back.’ ‘You know, I’m back.’ You know the kids who I don’t teach anymore, but I taught last year or ‘Miss, we want you back as our teacher’, the new kids, or excited, because they’ve got a new teacher, so, it’s nice. So, it’s fun.

I: How about your duties?

S: Pretty much the same.

I: How about the extra-curricular activities?

S: All the same.

I: And classroom management?

S: Classroom management is quite different this year than the last. But because that’s a shared role now, because it’s team-teaching, I’m not responsible for being the only teacher in the classroom—there are two of us. Instead of 40 students one teacher, it’s 40 students two teachers. And therefore you can give more individual attention. The 2 of us can walk around during an activity and see that all the students understand what to do. And if they don’t, we can intervene and stop right then and there and help them. It’s not possible to do that in a class of 40 students just because of the sheer size, it will take you too long to get around to each student, so, you know, today we did a listening activity, I

was able to said, and walk up and down the middle of two rows, and visually see all 20 students understood what to do and how to do it in about one minute, because I could just walk around and see. And those who couldn't, I could just point and show them on the board. You can't do that when there's 40 kids but one teacher, so, classroom management is much easier having a translator, and, uh...it's much easier having 2 bodies, instead of one. We catch more things. You know, one pair of eyes, and now it's been doubled—two pair of eyes. So we can see when one student is hitting another or when another student is cheating on a test or something like that, there was so much more the way to catch. And therefore, intervene positively with.

I: And how about motivating students to learn? Any difference?

S: Not really. But because we have no textbook, no curriculum now, the...it's more designed with aim in mind and their level, and we don't have the same amount of stress, we don't have to have finished unit 1 right now. We've done probably a third of unit 1, because we're covering the same kind of things that they were doing in unit 1. But, we are doing in a very different way, so, there's a lot less stress for me, there's a lot less stress for students. And when there's less stress for me, I was a much happier teacher, so I walk in a classroom, energised and enthusiastic, which affects them, and in turn, affects me, and so on.

I: And base on the above, is your current teaching experience different from what you expected before you came back from the summer?

S: No, I thought it's better than I've expected.

I: OK. That's all for the goals and expectation part. Do you have anything else to add to it?

S: No.

Appendix L

Classroom Observation Form

Classroom Observation Form

Part 1

Teacher's name : _____

Class: _____

Class size : _____(M)_____ (F)_____

Time of the class : _____

Venue : _____

Date of observation: _____

Page number : _____

[illegible]

2. Are the students well-prepared and motivated for the class (in the beginning, the middle, and near the end of the class)?
3. Does the teacher motivate the students? If yes, what does he or she do?
4. What is the teaching style of the teacher?
5. Does the teacher show good classroom management skills. If yes, give specific examples.
6. General impression of the teacher.
7. General impression of the student.
8. General impression of the students' level of English.
9. General impression of the class.
10. Has there been any cultural misunderstanding? If yes, give examples.
11. Does language barrier exist in the classroom? If yes, how did the teachers overcome the problem?
12. General discipline of the students.
13. General participation of the students.
14. Did the students understand the instruction? Give examples.

Appendix L
Sample Consent Letter to Subject

Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Room 322, 3/F,
Fung King Hey Building
Shatin, N.T.

24 September 2003

Dear [Name of the subject],

I am an MPhil candidate of Applied English Linguistics at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and would like to invite you to be a participant in my thesis research. A brief overview of my study and your possible involvement in it are provided in the paragraphs below.

My research is about the sociocultural adaptation of NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools. It aims to provide a better understanding of the problems encountered by NETs in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong secondary schools. It is hoped that the findings of this study can help future NETs as well as the present ones to understand and to adapt to life in Hong Kong secondary schools. To be more specific, I am interested in exploring the challenges faced by NETs in adapting to Hong Kong school culture and the strategies used to adjust to or modify it. At the same time, I would also like to find out what factors might affect acculturation.

To this end, individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with you on a biweekly basis. Field notes will be taken in and after each interview and an audio recording will be made with your permission. The audio recordings of the interviews will be transcribed and subject to a context analysis before the next session of the interview. The transcripts and field notes will serve as a record of the verbal data.

Classroom observation will also be part of the data collection procedures. Field notes will be immediately taken after the classroom observation to collect data about the general impressions of the class, the possible challenges you have faced as well as the strategies you have used. Post-observation interviews will be conducted with you

on the same day after the classroom observation takes place. In this way, I will gain insights about your school world and better understand the situation you are facing.

You will be expected to choose your own pseudonyms for yourself and your school. All information obtained in this research will not be disclosed under any circumstances. It will only be used for the purpose of this research and it will be kept strictly confidential.

I hope you will be able to participate in this study. If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail me <kate@cuhk.edu.hk>. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Kathy Ka Man Lee

To whom it may concern:

I _____ hereby authorize Miss Kathy Ka Man Lee to collect research data related to me for her Master of Philosophy thesis. As part of the data collection procedures, I understand that interviews will be conducted on a biweekly basis. Classroom observation and post-observation interviews will also be conducted.

I also understand that I have the right to terminate the study at any time.

Signature

Name in block letters

Date

Appendix N
Sample Consent Letter to School

Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Room 322, 3/F, Fung King Hey Building
Shatin, N.T.

9 June, 2003.

[name of principle
school address]

Dear [name of principle]:

I am writing to ask for your permission to do interview with [name of subject] at your school on [date].

I am an MPhil candidate of Applied English Linguistics at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. My research is about the sociocultural adaptation of NETs in Hong Kong secondary schools. As you may know, most of the existing studies have involved NETs expressing their views about the NET scheme. Some of them compared the workload and benefits of NETs and LETs. However, none of them has really addressed the adaptation problems or challenges NETs encounter in adapting to the school culture in Hong Kong. In view of this gap, my study aims to provide a better understanding of the problems encountered by NETs in this regard. It is hoped that the findings of the this study can help future NETs as well as the present ones to understand and to adapt to life in Hong Kong secondary schools.

To be more specific, I am interested in exploring the challenges faced by NETs in adapting to Hong Kong school culture and the strategies used to adjust to or modify it. At the same time, I would also like to find out what factors might affect acculturation.

In order to carry out this study, I need your kind assistance. If you have any questions or need further information, you may contact me via e-mail <kate@cuhk.edu.hk> or by phone at 9821-0909.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and help.

Yours truly,

Kathy Ka Man Lee

Personal Data Form

Name: _____
Surname Other names

Date of Birth: / / Gender: ☐ ☐
 DD MM YY Male Female

Email Address: _____

Phone number: _____ / _____

Marital Status: ☐ ☐ ☐
Single Married Divorced

Name of Current School: _____

School Address: _____

Medium of Instruction: ☐ ☐ Band: _____
EMI CMI

Length of Residence in Hong Kong (with dates in chronological order)

From (Month/Year)	To (Month/Year)	Duration
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total: _____

Education (in chronological order)

Date (Month/Year)		Schools, Colleges, Universities, etc. Attended/Attending	Class/Program Attended/Attending and Qualification Obtained / to be Obtained	Mode of Attendance (E.g., Full-time/ Part-time on Campus, Distance Learning, etc.)
From	To			

Full Employment Record to Date

(including past government employment and part-time job) (in chronological order)

Name of Firm/ Government Department	Full-time	Part-time	Position Held	Nature of Work	Date (Day/Month/Year)	
					From	To

Total Full-time Employment:	Year(s)	Month(s)

Record of Voluntary Service (in chronological order) (optional)

Name of Organisation/ Agency	Position Held	Date (Month/Year)	
		From	To

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